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Erratum

The picture reproduced on Plate 61 *may* have been inadvertently printed upside down or, possibly, upright on one of its sides. The painter would not commit himself one way or the other, nor would he wish, said he, to be quoted on the matter.

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The essays, etc., appearing in the issues of this journal will, for the most part, be derived from the work of seminar students, alumni, and members of the staff of The Barnes Foundation Art Department. On occasion, we shall publish articles and pieces not directly concerned with the Foundation's philosophy but representing original work by the Art Department's students and outside contributors which the editorial staff considers to be of general interest to Vistas readers.

Albert C. Barnes
by William J. Glackens
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VISTAS

VOL. II NO. 2

1981–1983

Subject and Subject Matter
Part II. Instrumentalism*

by VIOLETTE DE MAZIA**

Handsome is as handsome does.

Introduction

A wooden pencil is lying on my desk. A pencil, in and of itself, is a thin, cylindrical strip of graphite or of chalk contained in a usually cylindrical sheath of wood, metal or plastic.

With a few gently persuasive, subtly seductive nudges of her coaxing paw, soft and brisk and unabashedly insistent in their rapid succession, La Mikada, my kitten, deftly pushes the pencil to and off the edge of the desk and now, to her heart's content, rolls it playfully to and fro on the floor. The pencil has become a toy. La Mikada made the pencil be that toy. She made of the pencil a means, a tool, an instrument well fitted for attaining her objective. The kitten, in other words, used the pencil instrumentally.

I hold a pencil with my fingers so that it projects horizontally from my hand. At my signal, the tame and trained

*Some of the material of this essay was originally presented by the author in class lectures at The Barnes Foundation.

**Director of Education of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

cockateel flaps its wings, leaves its cage and alights on the pencil alongside my bent fingers. The pencil has become the bird's perch. The cockateel, together with me, made the pencil be and mean a bird's perch. We made of the pencil a means, a tool, an instrument well fitted for attaining our objective. The pencil, once again, was used instrumentally.

The pencil on the desk, however, untouched, unused, *is not* a kitten's plaything, *is not* a bird's perch, as it *is not,* in actuality, even a writing or a drawing implement, although it had been manufactured to serve as such. Yet, it *can become, can be* and *is* any one of those things, or any other out of a vast variety, when and as it is made use of to fulfill specific requirements, when it is made a means to, an instrument for, a particular purpose: to play with, to perch on, to write or to draw with. Otherwise, it is all those things, and others, merely in a potential way, since only purposive, instrumental use of it confers upon it an identity other than that which it has as an object pure and simple—*viz.,* a wooden sheath around a stem of graphite or chalk.

In our first essay on Subject and Subject Matter,* we demonstrated that, whatever the subject of a painting might refer to in the outside world, that subject acquires a new, a specific identity as it is used by the artist for the characteristics, the identity, of his picture. The subject, in other words, as it is made to be a tool, a means, an instrument well fitted to attain the artist's objective, becomes subject matter. This acquisition of new identity comes about because, in the using of any material for the fulfillment of some particular purpose, relationships that did not exist before among the components of the material are established, which relationships, by their very occurrence, act on that material and thereby endow it with a distinct significance. That is what happened with the pencil when it was made to serve the ends of the kitten and of the cockateel. And that is what happens when the artist's subject is made to serve the artist's individual interest. The

*Violette de Mazia, *Vistas,* Spring-Summer, 1980, pp. 3–48.

principle behind such transformation of matter is aptly called instrumentalism. Broadly stated, it accounts for the fact that, through instrumental use of an idea or of material, such an idea or material is re-created and thus gains a new character.

By the same principle of instrumentalism under which specific identity is conferred on what is used as a means to a specific end—*i.e.,* the principle accounting for the fact that the kitten's pencil became one thing and the cockateel's another—do the artist's brush strokes, color, light, subject, traditional elements and whatever else makes up his picture become *those* brush strokes, *that* color, and so forth, with *their* characteristics and significance, positive or negative in nature, as the case may be, from the standpoint of aesthetic desiderata.

Like a pencil, a given brush stroke has a factual, a "dictionary," meaning—*i.e.,* certain features that distinguish it from other perceivable things, including other brush strokes. There is, as an example, a brush stroke of a particular shape—one that could be "defined" as an open arc or an open-umbrella curve—that has been used for the depiction of foliage in a variety of paintings from a number of traditions, such as in Paolo Veronese's "Baptism" (Plate 2), Tintoretto's "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" (Plate 62), Rubens' "The Holy Family" (Plate 64), Watteau's "Idyl" (Plate 66), Gainsborough's "Perdita Robinson" (Plate 4), Renoir's "Bather [Gabrielle] Drying Herself" (Plate 6) and Renoir's "Bust of Nude" (Plate 69). In isolation—that is, removed from its context and, therefore, from its performance in the carrying out of the artist's interest—this stroke, for all intents and purposes, is, in each work, the same. It is delineated by the same general movement of the brush in a quasi semi-circular direction, and, though larger in some of the paintings than in others, wider in some, it has the same essential "dictionary" meaning of arc-shaped stroke.

Again, however, like the pencil as it was made to serve the purposes of the kitten and of the bird, the brush stroke acquires specific meaning by what it is used for and what it accomplishes. In Veronese's "Baptism" (Plate 2), a few

of the arc-strokes appear in small clusters at the center of the composition in the dark area above Christ's shoulder (Detail Plate 3). Each brush stroke, somewhat taut and of a light greenish tone, is separated from its companions, and all are gently projected forward by and set off from the dark brown, relatively unpatterned area on which their own pattern occurs. Together, their identity is primarily that of an illustrative and expressive bit of foliage, feathery and delicately dramatic in character, with each component seemingly suspended in space.

A sibling to the Veronese brush stroke in his "Baptism," from the point of view of its being just a stroke of the brush that applies color to the canvas in a certain shape, is found in Tintoretto's "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" (Plate 62) on the upper part of one of the distant dark hills seen above Christ's shoulder (Detail Plate 63). Now, however, this stroke has been made a participant in rows of highlighting strokes which, in their relationship to their immediate surroundings, bring the hill into relief and present it to the viewer's eye as one of the color volumes in a rhythmic succession of such units from foreground to far-off regions. As with the pencil as an instrument for the kitten and for the bird, so with the brush stroke in the Veronese and the Tintoretto—another intent brought to bear, another meaning acquired by the brush stroke.

In Rubens' "The Holy Family" (Plate 64), each curved stroke in the large area of foliage at the upper center (Detail Plate 65)—separated from its context, no more than a simple arc or an open-umbrella curve—becomes one of many similar strokes, albeit of varying tones, colors and sizes. With these others, each stroke enters into an intricate pattern of interweaving curves, reminiscent in shape of a series of intertwining, dashed-off capital "*E*"s in cursive writing. All combine into a grouping of small linear swirls which echo, this time without the tautness of the former two examples, the motif of free swirl enacted on a larger scale by the volumes throughout the picture organization.

Watteau's use of the arc-stroke in his "Idyl" (Plate 66, Detail Plate 67) is not unlike that of Rubens in "The Holy Family," even, perhaps, too much like it. However, the

character of the painting, one of wholehearted decorativeness, light and airy in nature, is its own, to which the arc-stroke contributes and from which it therefore acquires a new, specific, modified-by-that-primarily-decorative-idea identity.

In Gainsborough's "Perdita Robinson" (Plate 4), the arc-stroke that purports to depict foliage in the background left of the figure (Detail Plate 5), which stroke was also derived from Rubens, has practically lost its expressive *raison d'être:* it produces little more than a going-through-the-motions effect. That is to say, the painter has fallen short of using it instrumentally. He leaves it more or less bare of meaning beyond that which it has by virtue of mere existence—the pencil as a cylinder of wood around graphite, the stroke as a unit of such-and-such a shape.

The few large, highlighted arc-strokes above and to the right of the figure's head in Renoir's "Bather [Gabrielle] Drying Herself" (Plate 6, Detail Plate 7) are color units that project forward like fingers of a hand and help to make a niche of the dark area at the left, a pocket of dark space in which the figure's head is set. And, with Renoir's "Bust of Nude" (Plate 69), the arc-strokes, located in the foliage right and left of and close to the figure (Detail Plates 70 and 71), help to build up a fluid sequence of volumes that carry on into space a receding rhythm of swirls and, by that, help to unite figure and background.

In each of the above examples, once again, another purpose, another instrumental use of the brush stroke, another meaning acquired by the stroke. Not only has the artist created new effects, but he has also created, invented, the means of achieving these effects. And this, basically, is the crux of instrumentalism and may well turn out to be the refrain, as it were, of our discussion.

Whatever be the thing done, made, stated, in short, accomplished, it has had to rely, as we observed, on instrumentalism for its particular meaning. From the preceding discussion, we can see, too, that the process whereby identity is acquired, *i.e.,* instrumentalism in action, involves and

is, therefore, to be understood in terms of three more or less discrete elements or facets. The first consists of the material used—pencil, brush stroke, etc., each with a factual significance, each with its own characteristics, and, thus, each having a particular range of possibilities for new meaning. Then is there the specific manner in which the selected material is used—a pencil batted about with certain kinds of maneuvers of the paw or landed upon in a particular coordinated fashion; an arc-stroke used to initiate or augment a curvilinear activity or to punctuate an area of space, and so on. Above all, there is the objective, the intent, which guides the former two facets or elements and, also, is expressed in their application—to make a toy, for instance, to make a perch; to establish a picture motif, to qualify the nature of a spatial recession.

In practice, the process may bog down or miscarry on any one or more of these three facets of instrumentalism. In Renoir's "Girl in Landscape" (Plate 73), for example, there is an occasion of falling down in the selection of the appropriate means for the picture's needs in the dark, vertical, slightly slanting strip, drab and dull of color, down the center of the figure's skirt, which strip, because of its drabness, interrupts, undermines the sparkling, glowing, lustrous structural luminosity that pervades and qualifies the rest of the canvas. It is matter out of place, a hole in the picture's fabric. Failing, as it does, to contribute its share of internal luminosity, it fails to be the proper means, the right tool, the appropriate instrument, for achieving the overall intent—a screwdriver employed to drive a nail into a plank, a toothbrush employed to scrub a floor, the mere stub of a pencil employed to make a bird's perch, an anchored pencil employed to make a kitten's rolling plaything. Instrumentalism has bogged down, and frustration replaces gratification.

Indeed, the intrinsic nature of the thing or situation used plays as much a part in the specific character, identity and significance it acquires when serving as an instrument to some end as does the purposive use itself.

Likewise leading to a sense of frustration is a lack of appropriateness in the manner in which the means are

employed. From this point of view, there are in Monet's "Mme Monet Embroidering" (Plate 8), upon the area depicting the figure's apron (Detail Plate 9), many small multicolored dabs, sparkling and jewel-like. The method of their application, however, causes them to dance atop and to tickle, so to speak, the surface of what they purport to make up, rather than to impart to it the sense of underlying structure present in the areas of the rest of the painting. As such, these superficial dabs implement an idea which is, from an expressive standpoint, limited to the qualities intrinsic to mere surface decoration.*

Underlying our criticism of the selection of means and their handling in the specific works cited was a recognition, each time, of the pursuit of a legitimate aesthetic intent. That is, it was a flaw in the *fulfilling* of the intent rather than a flaw in the intent itself that was of concern. It is also possible to select and use the means constructively and yet be faulted on the character of the intent thus fulfilled, *i.e.*, expressed. Such is the case, for instance, of Luigi Lucioni's "Still Life" (Plate 80), in which, as a part of an utterly banal, contrived compositional arrangement, the dusty gray-brown color and the shape and three-dimensionality of the volume representing a Bosc pear are what that shape and volume and dusty gray-brown are in the actual Bosc pear and what they would appear to be to any normal retina and on any camera-clicker's color print. So, too, would the red, thinly striated, glistening surface and the configuration and three-dimensionality of the Stayman apple, the cold green of the lime, and the yellow waxiness of the Gravenstein apple. These identifying surface markings and the sense of solidity are literally reproduced by the painter and are done with such accuracy that a knowledgeable greengrocer would have no difficulty in categorizing each species of fruit. Such colors and shapes used to depict the objects of still life were, it is true, selected as those and no others, and the intent underlying their selection—to replicate in pigment on canvas the still-life

*The arc-strokes noted earlier in Gainsborough's "Perdita Robinson" (Plate 4, Detail Plate 5) exemplify the same general point.

setup—was, in fact, fully realized. But the purpose itself, one of simply re-producing what the eye registers, is not in the category of things that art demands and supplies. The colors, etc., in the Lucioni do not, in their picture effects and activities, reach beyond being what they were in the original fruit; they offer no intrinsic qualities of their own and, while serving well the painter's intent, are instrumental to no *aesthetic* result, save, perhaps, one of a job well done. In that, however, there is disregard of the fact that, from the viewpoint of art, of creativeness, the job well done was not, to begin with, worth doing. Thus, the fault, here, lies in the nature of the intent, and it is on that score that instrumentalism, in this instance, bogs down.

Implicit in the foregoing discussion, and of primary significance to the subsequent analytical studies and to the understanding of the point of this essay, are two important features of instrumentalism that remain to be pinpointed. The first is that instrumentalism is well nigh inseparable from creativeness—indeed, is close to being synonymous with it, save for the fact that, with instrumentalism, it is the new identity of the *means* employed which is focussed upon, while, with creativeness, it is the *end* which the means achieve. Secondly, and by the same token, instrumentalism is the key to understanding the relationship of subject to subject matter and/or the process that transforms subject into subject matter, for it is the process of instrumentalism that gives subject a new identity, *viz.*, that of subject matter.

Instrumentalism in Two Paintings: A Comparison

a) SIMILARITIES

A concentrated comparative study of two paintings—"Belport" (Fold-out Plate 104), by William Glackens, and "Revere Beach" (Fold-out Plate 111), by Maurice Pren-

dergast*—will allow for a more explicit development of the import of our observations and for an enlarging upon our illustration of the rôle of instrumentalism in both the creative process and its results. The comparative study will be made from the point of view of the premise we have established, namely, that nothing means anything specific to us just by being. Or, to state it in positive terms, all things acquire specific meaning as a result of *who* uses them (whether physically or in perception), *how* they are used, *for what* purpose they are used, and, also, according to the intrinsic nature, the potentialities of *what* is used. Thus, for instance, with reference to *who* is using something, bathers as a part of a subject used by Cézanne (*e.g.,* Plate 75) cannot mean the same thing as bathers as a part of a subject used by Renoir (*e.g.,* Plate 74). Furthermore, as a result of *why* or *what for,* bathers used by Cézanne in his "Nudes in Landscape" (Plate 77) for his picture idea at that time cannot mean the same thing as do bathers in his "Men Bathing" (Plate 79). And, also, bathers standing for *what* is used cannot ever be made to mean the same thing as, say, fruit on table.

The two pictures chosen for the demonstration have certain features that make them appropriate to the use we shall make of them.† First, while neither one represents the artist at his best, each is typical of his general manner of doing. In addition, the paintings are not too complex; what they communicate is fairly easy to see and to show.

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*There were two Prendergast brothers—Maurice, who died in 1924, and Charles, who died in 1948. Charles was also an artist. His work includes highly decorative panels, chests, screens, frames, boxes (*e.g.*, Plates 82, 83 and 84), all having a Persian-Egyptian-Byzantine character. His method of working consisted, usually, of carving into gesso-covered panels and decorating the resulting picture with color and gold leaf. Charles employed the carving technique first in the making of frames (*e.g.,* Plate 84) for his brother's paintings and then adapted it to his own pictures (*e.g.,* Plate 82). In his late years (*e.g.,* Plate 85), his work came under the influence of his brother's, but retained the use of some of the Oriental features and an expression of naïveté that were his from the beginning.

†Our purpose in comparing "Belport" and "Revere Beach" is not to evaluate the relative merit of these works. It is, instead, as we have indicated, to illustrate some basic principles of instrumentalism and to anchor them firmly in concrete examples.

Moreover, with their relative simplicity, each reveals a distinctive, a creative personality, imitative of no one and expressive in terms of qualities of the medium employed. And, finally, the two artists started off with a number of facts in common that are alike as raw material—*i.e.*, as *what* they used, but not as *how* they used it nor as *what intent* it was made to objectify.*

The plan, logical and simple, of our study will be to seek answers to the following pertinent inquiries: (1) What in these two pictures are the elements, the material, which the artists share? (2) What in each case is the motive, the intent of the picture, its "design"?† (3) How does Glackens,

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*Glackens and Prendergast started off with even more in common than the outside material of life and of art. As people, they shared a number of attributes and circumstances. Both were American, and that, we might say, stands for an outlook, a background, a history and general interests and a temperament that being of any other nationality does not. They were of about the same age: Prendergast's dates are 1859 to 1924, and Glackens' 1870 to 1938—which means that they lived in the same broadly delineated environment, under the influence of American life, culture and art of the period.

Furthermore, the two men were friends—that is, more than acquaintances. Friends entertain a regard and a respect for each other, as well as affection, and the two were close friends. Each, also, was interested in and intelligently understood what the other was doing in his work. Indeed, they shared many interests and tastes and feelings about things and people. They both enjoyed travelling and painting in Europe and, in this country, visited sites along the Eastern shore, where they fished and painted.

Glackens and Prendergast were both also part of a contemporary world of art through their artist-friends, particularly through those together with whom they made up a group that became known as the "Eight," or the "Ashcan School"—the latter of these invented to deride the members' tendency to depict ordinary subjects, among them an ashcan. Along with Glackens and Prendergast, the group included John Sloan, Robert Henri, Everett Shinn, Ernest Lawson, George Luks and Arthur B. Davies. Glackens and Prendergast also frequently shared the friendly companionship of some of the writers of their day—Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the editors of the *New York Sun, The New York Times* and *The Herald.*

Dr. Barnes, who was an intimate of both Glackens and Prendergast, described the two as knowing men of the world, with never a false note in either and not a sign of affectation; he found them to be genuine and direct, sincerely detesting artificiality, pretentions, sophistication and humbug of any kind, and at all times to be keenly alive and sensitively and intelligently keyed up to the various incidents and drama of the life around them.

†By the term design, we do not mean pattern, although pattern has a design. Instead, we mean a particular idea, an end in view, what the artist planned, "designed," to achieve. In other words, design, in our context, stands for intent

how does Prendergast use that material that they have in common in order to fulfill the requirements of their respective motives? (4) How is that material affected, just what new identity is imparted to it in each picture as a result of its being used instrumentally for the sake of carrying out the intent? Finally, (5) how is subject transformed into subject matter?

To begin with, the subject of one painting was much like that of the other—a water scene at Belport, a water scene at Revere Beach, each with figures engaging in familiar activities. In other words, the two works have a similar objective starting point,* *i.e.,* a similar general subject, a subject offering similar possibilities *before* it was used instrumentally, worked on, by each artist's eyes, feelings, interests, imagination and hand. Just as there was the pencil for the kitten to use as she would, for me and the cockateel to use as we would, there, for both Glackens and Prendergast, was a water scene, a near-at-hand, familiar episode, with nothing remote in it in time or space, a piece of actuality right around the artist's and anyone else's cor-

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or purpose, and it includes the overall plan or scheme. A color scheme, for instance, is a color design. And we get the design of a painting not necessarily from what the artist says in words that it is—for he may not even be consciously aware of what that is—but from what he has put on the canvas, and what *that* indicates that his purpose was.

*We refer to an "*objective* starting point" because to trace the real origin of an idea is impossible. The subject is actually the objective situation that gives birth to a new idea or that crystalizes some idea which may have occurred at any time—an objective situation which the artist discovers is appropriate to his idea.

To illustrate this notion, we can recount the experiences of a student at The Barnes Foundation who used to drive to class from New York. On a certain day, we discussed Cézanne's "Still Life with Ginger Jar" (Plate 10) from the point of view of its "avenue," made by the folds of the cloth at the center bordered with fruit on each side, which leads the eye to the "vista" of the lemon at the back. Afterwards, as he sped along on his way home, this student saw a similarity of relationships between the oncoming trees and buildings on each side of the road and the components in the Cézanne, and, there and then, he decided to carry out that still-life idea with a landscape as his subject. Likewise, when Cézanne used figures or trees (*e.g.,* Plate 77), he may well have had in mind the rocks in a quarry or the stalagmites of a cavern. Or, when Renoir similarly made use of the head of a young girl as a subject (*e.g.,* Plate 1), the idea he expressed in the finished work may have had its source in a garden of flowers in June.

ner.* And we can see and say that both paintings express an overall spirit of place—an outdoor sense of freshness and aliveness, in contrast, for instance, to many other artists' outdoor scenes, such as Claude's "Pastoral Landscape" (Plate 99), Rousseau's "People in Sunday Clothes" (Plate 93) and Cézanne's "Nudes in Landscape" (Plate 77).

The Glackens and the Prendergast share also certain characteristics of color, light, line, drawing, space and technique. In both, for example, the color can be described broadly as fresh and high-key, as it can, too, in the Impressionists. Besides that, the color scheme in the Glackens and the Prendergast consists of an interplay of warm and cool hues within a pervasively cool, bluish tonality which enters into and spreads over all areas.

This pervasive blue in the Glackens and the Prendergast is not a monochrome. In fact, it holds a rich content of colorfulness: the paintings are multi-colorfully blue, with a high-key freshness to the tonality. This multi-colorfulness within the blue comes from the artists' use of the divisionistic method and *alla prima* technique† of the Impressionists.

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*In Glackens and Prendergast, the focus, in general in their work, is on a subject of an everyday sort, with such exceptions as Glackens' "Krishna and the Milkmaids" (Plate 87) and Prendergast's "Idyl" (Plate 86). In the two water scenes under study, however, the ordinary type of subject prevails.

†We can compare the manner of painting the trees and water in Sisley (*e.g.*, Plate 90) with that in Claude (*e.g.*, Plate 97) and Corot (*e.g.*, Plate 91): in the first, these units are made of a variety of colors; in the latter two, they are made either of a single, unmodified color (in the Corot) or of tones of a single color (in the Claude). The difference is a result of the Impressionists' interest in retaining the maximum amount of luminous colorfulness throughout the canvas, for which effect they would juxtapose individual strokes of contrasting pigments and rely on the mechanics of optical fusion in visual perception to provide the color identity of the particular areas. Thus, for example, to produce the effect of purple, instead of blending blue and red on the palette and/or on the canvas, they would apply a small dab of one of the colors side by side with a small dab of the other and leave it to the principle of optical fusion to blend them together. This manner of doing was derived by the Impressionists from the discoveries of the physicists of their time working in the field of optics who uncovered the prismatic color constituents of light. With the exception of the Pointillist works of Seurat and a few other artists, Impressionist paintings were not constructed exclusively of such dabs of color, but also included colors blended on both palette and canvas.

This divisionistic method of the Impressionists does, in fact, yield an outward lu-

Also as in the paintings of the Impressionists, light in the Glackens and the Prendergast floods the picture—this in contrast to the focalized or localized regions of dark and of light of the Impressionists' predecessors (*e.g.*, Plate 99)—and, within this flood of light, and fully compatible with it, there is also a drama of small dark and light punctuations. Again as in the Impressionists, light and dark in both paintings are made of color, rather than of tones.*

So, then, both in the Glackens and in the Prendergast we find the use of the Impressionists' flood of light and their merging of light and color. Added to this is another feature the two paintings share with the works of the Impressionists, *viz.*, the organizing of the entire canvas on the basis of what Dr. Barnes termed a "homogeneous mass of color and light."†

This homogeneous mass of color and light in the Glackens and the Prendergast serves, as it does also in the Impressionists, an interest in the episodic, the nearby,

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minosity and a kind of color richness that cannot be obtained by any other method practiced before, not by the glazes of the Venetians—a glaze is a thin, transparent layer, generally dark, of pigment applied over a dry, opaque, generally light color to produce variations in tone and color and a sense of transparency and of depth—nor by the "local" color of, for instance, the Florentines or the Dutch—"local" color, when referred to in painting, is an object's or area's actual color unaffected by either highlighting or shading or by other colors.

Alla prima, or *au premier coup* (with the first touch) is a technique in painting which consists in applying the color directly to the surface of the canvas and leaving it unchanged, so that the wanted effect is produced by only one application of pigments. Both the divisionistic method and the *alla prima* technique give the artist the opportunity, with every dab he applies to the canvas, to enrich and enliven the color throughout with effects possible only with that method and that technique.

*Shadows in the Impressionists' theory are not an absence of light and, therefore, an absence of color, but a light that reveals another color. Accordingly, the Impressionists reserved certain colors, in general, the cool ones, such as the blues, the lavenders, etc., for rendering shadow areas and the warm ones, such as the yellows and the reds, for rendering lighted areas. The result was a continuous quiver of small luminous units of color and of light and dark replacing the pattern of large units of dark and large units of light in the pre-Impressionists (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plates 90 and 99).

†The word "homogeneous" in this context has the same meaning as it has when used in reference, for instance, to milk which has been so processed that it is milk-cream in the same relative proportions to each other all the way through, from the top to the bottom of the container.

character of the scene and helps, too, in all of them, to establish a sense of oneness by way of the continuity of color and light as it maintains approximately the same key in the foreground and the middle and far distance—this in contradistinction to the achievement of oneness in terms of tone gradations marking the recession of space such as occurs in the works of the Old Masters, *e.g.*, "Pastoral Landscape" (Plate 99), by Claude.

From the standpoint of drawing, the Glackens and the Prendergast share the fact that they say a lot with a little. Drawing, that is, in both is expressive in a terse manner. It is simplified, abbreviated. Volumes, for example, are flattened into shapes that tell of the attitude and activity of a figure with a minimum of detail given—a feature that has its source in Manet, as, for instance, his "Woman Walking in the Garden" (Plate 12). The figures are, in both water scenes, elongated and produce a linear pattern, *i.e.*, a pattern of directions. As for the drawing of the outline, neither Glackens nor Prendergast duplicates the shape or detail of things as known. Instead, each departs from a literal reproduction by omitting, adding and altering for the purpose of the picture idea.*

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*Such departures from the literal facts of the subject as Glackens and Prendergast make are what we broadly term distortions. Creative distortion in art can be described as the imaginative, purposive, constructive use of facts of color, shape, light, volume, space. Their occurrence in the visual arts functions much as do the metaphors, hyperboles, similes, ellipses, etc., in literature. It serves to heighten the significance of the artist's statement and allows things difficult of expression to be said. When, for instance, Glackens and Prendergast say, respectively, "a pancake slice of a figure," "a blob of a face," whatever license they may have taken with the "facts" of figure and face, they give a more vivid, succinct, "complete" and picturesque account of the actuality referred to than would have been possible had all the details been scrupulously set out. Indeed, these departures are not different in kind from such a selective description of human existence as "all the world's a stage" and the subsequent elaboration of this "inaccurate" observation.

Just as the writer may do much to shape and enhance his meaning with such usages as alliteration and pace—as Poe did with "Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dreamed before"—so, too, can an artist-painter, by way of repetition, the nature of what is repeated and the manner in which the repetition is made to occur, produce an effect otherwise unattainable. Glackens, for example, makes the sail of the centrally located boat in "Belport" more blue than it could appear in actuality at the distance from the foreground it is shown to be, for the sake of a color insistence that helps to bring the distance nearer by saying blue here, blue there, blue once more there. Similarly, in the Prendergast, the distortion of the faces into blobs offers the artist the possibility of setting up

The distortions in the Glackens and the Prendergast may be found not only in the shapes, the outlines, the volumes and the details, but also in the color and in each artist's use of light, as our analyses will show. And there are in both, too, distortions of space, one of which is the tilting upward and forward, from the back, of the main horizontal plane of ground and water—a feature seen in the Impressionists as well (*e.g.,* Plate 11)—against and upon which vertical plane a recession of uprights takes place.*

Still another space distortion present in both the Glackens and the Prendergast is the incorporation, throughout, of color punctuations that take the eye in and out of space like so many stepping-stones. In both, there is also a play on three distinct effects of space—first, space containing a compact grouping of units; second, space with sparsely distributed units; and, third, space empty of things and going off into infinity. Likewise in both, is there a colorful, sunlit atmosphere—a feature, once more, that stems from the Impressionists (*e.g.,* Plate 101).†

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a particular rhythm of blob-blob-blob. Put the "true" tone of blue on the Glackens sail by graying it, put the "correct" features on the faces in the Prendergast, and the interesting-in-itself, the novel, vivid picture effects, the richness of meaning vanish.

Distortions, of course and obviously must, abound in the work of an artist, for his expression is always of his *experience* of the subject facts, not of the subject facts themselves. It is not, in other words, a fault we have discovered when we find, for instance, in Renoir a flower-esque face (*e.g.,* Plate 1), mother-o'-pearl flesh (*e.g.,* Plate 25), Rubens-esque figure proportions (*e.g.,* Plate 24). Indeed, these traits, with the free play of imagination they involve, stand in contrast to, for example, the literally rendered—albeit distorted—fruit in Lucioni's still life shown on Plate 80, which are but a camera-snapped type of depiction, just as poetry and poetic prose stand in contrast to the ordinary newspaper writeup of an event, although there is distortion in the latter, too, but not for the sake of an aesthetic interest and with no particular aesthetic result.

*Raising the horizon towards the top is another way of decribing the above-noted distortion of the plane of the setting. It is by no means new in the traditions. Nothing ever is. But Glackens and Prendergast make, in these canvasses, as will be specified later, a new, an instrumental, use of it, as they adapt it to serve their individual intents.

†The Impressionists arrived at this effect by lightening, in the sense of both weight and tonality, the dark, dense, golden glow of the atmosphere in the works of the Venetians (*e.g.,* Plate 62), who, themselves, had injected a new color density and weight into the gray atmospheric haze of the Florentine painter Masaccio (*e.g.,* Plate 15), who, in his turn, had, with his inclusion of a feeling of gray atmospheric haze, made a departure from the typical crystal-clear space of the general run of painters of the Florentine tradition, as, for instance, Ghirlandaio (*e.g.,* Plate 19).

As a result of a similar metaphoric distortion of volumes into areas, the Glackens and the Prendergast water scenes share also a pattern of patches,* and these patterning areas are themselves internally patterned by the activity of the brush work—a consequence, again, of the artists' borrowing from the technique of the Impressionists—imparting to the total scene, as in the Impressionists, an overall quivering, vibrating activity of color, light, space and atmosphere.

To sum up the first lap of our comparison of the Glackens and the Prendergast water scenes: we have pointed out that the two artists employed a number of similar factors. These factors are, however, the same for the paintings only by virtue of being *what* was used, as the pencil was the same for the kitten and the cockateel in that they both used it. The next step in our study is to examine each artist's intent or motive, his picture idea, his design, and to determine how, because of that, one artist uses the material to make of it *this,* as the kitten made of the pencil a toy, and the other to make of it *that,* as the cockateel made of the pencil a perch—*i.e.,* to see what new meaning arises as the material is used instrumentally for each picture intent, motive or design.

b) THE PICTURE INTENT IN EACH WATER SCENE

From the perspective of intent or design, Glackens and Prendergast, in "Belport" and "Revere Beach," respectively, obviously differ. Glackens clearly is interested as much in presenting *what* the situation was that he perceived

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*This manner of handling the portrayal of volumes produces a patterned organization with effects that cannot be produced when volumes *per se* are stressed—a difference made clearly evident by a comparison of, say, the silhouetted volumes in Renoir's "Cup of Chocolate" (Plate 68) or in Cézanne's "Woman [Mme Cézanne] in Green Hat" (Plate 31), in each of which areas are subsidiary to volumes, with Matisse's "The Riffian" (Plate 40) or Manet's "Woman Walking in the Garden" (Plate 12), in each of which volumes have been flattened into shapes.

and felt about as in expressing *how* he perceived it and felt about that. Accordingly, the broad human values embodied in the painting are conveyed very directly, though by no means solely, by way of the subject facts, the situation itself, what was there, what took place—*those* figures, *those* boats, etc. Prendergast, in contrast, rather than straightforwardly informing or precisely indicating what the units were and what they were doing, centers on his feelings about and his perception of the scene as a whole—the color patterns and the rhythms of their relationships, the compositional effect of the grouping of units, and so on—and the broad human values inherent in that sort of conception. In short, whatever Glackens expresses is pinned onto the character of a lively animation of easily recognizable things and easily identifiable activities, as against the more generalized manner of presentation and the calmer, more measured tempo of the Prendergast scene, which, nevertheless, also evokes a feeling of familiarity. So, as already intimated, Glackens' interest is in creating certain effects, Prendergast's in creating others.

This difference between the two paintings can be brought out, perhaps, by translating the message in each into a verbal account we might get from one person and another returning from a vacation in such a spot as Glackens and Prendergast used as a subject for painting their water scenes. The "Glackens" vacationer tells in simple but picturesque, convincing and vivid language of the putt-putting of the motor boat, of the swishing down the slide, of the sprinkling of sunlight, and so forth. And he so selects from what he saw, stressing some features and characteristics and ignoring others, that we feel that we were told exactly what was there and what took place. Still, he does not tell all, and, if he did, we would be bored. We are interested in the facts told because of the way in which the "Glackens" vacationer tells of them, and we get, also, what it meant to him by his coherent, direct, yet poetical word picture. The "Prendergast" vacationer tells his story in what we might describe as a childlike way. We get less accurately, in the usual sense, the subject facts. But we get, from his voice, from the glow in his cheeks, from the spar-

kle in his eyes, together with the bits of factual information he includes in his telling, the meaning it all had for him.

With Glackens, then, it is the *what* that aroused his feelings, and, with Prendergast, the *feelings* aroused by the what that receive the lion's share of the attention—a matter, in short, of emphasis. The impact, in the Prendergast, of what were, for example, figures and boats as far as the subject is concerned comes out as one of color patches that chase each other across the canvas. As the black-and-white reproduction demonstrates, these color patches, which, in the painting, subtly contrast with each other as hues and approximate each other in their tonality, appear in the black-and-white presentation to be of a nearly identical gray. Thus, despite the dark outline of these light-colored units, the clarity of their illustrative aspect is diminished, with the result that the picture as a whole is as much an exposition of the activity of color patches as it is of the activity of figures, boats, etc.

In the case of the Glackens and its illustrative units, the relationship between those two picture elements is reversed. Here, the color units or patches are well marked off from each other by their pronounced contrast in both hue and tone. Their shapes, therefore, hence, also, the illustrative character they have been given, are, despite the absence of separate lines or bands of outline, more readily perceived than are their activity as color patches *per se*.*

c) GLACKENS' WATER SCENE

Having seen that one characteristic of Glackens' design in "Belport" is to inform of the subject facts, we need to find out what kind of information it is that Glackens gives us. Does he, for instance, provide a mere inventory of those

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*A comparison of each of the black-and-white photographs of the two paintings with the actual canvasses lends emphasis to our point. With the absence of color, the Glackens loses, as is true of many paintings, about ninety percent of what it is. But the Prendergast, as could be gathered from what we said above, loses ninety-nine and nine-tenths percent of what it is, for, though shape is retained, the original color values are gone, and it is on the basis of the latter that the units in the Prendergast are primarily constructed.

facts, or does he invest them with an interest that transcends factual identity? In other words, is the story all we get, just a simple reportorial narrative, or does the story, because of Glackens' way of telling it, become subsidiary to the character of the whole, of which the story itself is only a part? The latter is the case, even though what is being told is definitely anchored on the fact-depicting aspect of the means—that is, on what, in general, is the concern of illustration.*

From the point of view of the general characteristics of the type of illustration and how they are used for the carrying out of the picture design, what perhaps strikes us first about "Belport" are that Glackens gives many facts and that these are distributed throughout a variety of episodes—the float with its group of figures, the swimmers, the pier unit, the sailboat with its solitary occupant, the distant beach and houses, the motorboat, the small sailboat at the left, the clouds.

With such diversity of subject facts, do we, as a result, get these episodes as a one-after-another sort of sequence, a "there-was-this-and-then-that-and-then-that" kind of story? No, we do not. On the contrary, these episodes, individual as they are, are made to belong to each other and to work together to make up the entire scene. Like the chapters of a well-organized book or the paragraphs of a well-organized chapter or the stanzas of a well-organized poem or the acts of a well-organized play or the movements of a well-wrought symphony, they complete each other. For there is, among such episodes, such chapters, etc., however different each may be from its companions, an organic interdependence. Each is what it is as

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*To illustrate is to throw light on the subject facts as such, to supply factual information that permits identification of the objective starting point in the world, *i.e.*, the artist's subject. As long, indeed, as a painting retains factors that inform of the identity of the subject as it was, the element of illustration is present, and it is present in proportion to the amount of direct factual reference made. The extreme of illustration is represented by such categories as "Pop" art and by the work of merely reportorial painters, such as, for example, Winslow Homer (*e.g.*, Plate 76), while the opposite extreme includes the typical works of the so-called Abstract and Non-objective painters and the practitioners of "Op" art and other contemporary *avant-garde* movements.

much because of the previous and subsequent episodes, chapters, etc., as because of what occurs within it. And, when we are through the painting, the story, the chapter, the poem, the play, the symphony, we get the overall significance from that organic, *i.e.*, not superficial, interrelationship of all the parts, even though one area or one chapter, etc., stands out from the others because the climax of the organization is reached in it—as happens in the Glackens picture in the episode involving the float. But the float is a climax not only by virtue of its own intrinsic character, but also because of the nature of the other episodes and of the specific relationships among them all. If we eliminate the right half of the canvas (Plate 103), leaving the float episode stranded, as it were, out of touch with its context, we lose its meaning of climax, and it loses the vitality it previously had and its sense of being poised in space. To state it concisely, then, Glackens' "Belport" is an episodic illustration, with, as we shall see, a coherence, a unity, that qualifies its variety.

Still another feature of Glackens' rendering of the episodes that distinguishes this picture from the works of the run-of-the-mill illustrators is the picturesqueness with which he imbues the scene depicted. The subject itself is commonplace enough. And, if the facts were all that Glackens saw and told of—"There was a float, there was a slide," and so on—it would be nothing much on which to build up an aesthetic statement and nothing much, either, for creating an aesthetic response. Because, however, as our analytical study will show, of the unexpected happenings of color, of light, etc., the relatively unexciting scene acquires a distinctive aliveness. The ordinary facts become aesthetically significant in part because of the non-ordinary manner of their being told. That is, picturesque aliveness also characterizes Glackens' design.

Additionally coming in to qualify Glackens' design is the effect the picture has on our eye, irrespective of the illustrative meanings we may get from it. That is to say, there is a sensuousness, a decorativeness, expressed by it, and that decorativeness is of a particular kind, namely, one that partakes of a subdued, yet vivid, pattern of small, crisp,

sprightly units that gently scintillate. The eye is fed as from an Oriental rug.

Broadly speaking, then, the main aspects of the picture design of the Glackens are: (1) illustration of an episodic sort; (2) coherence, unity; (3) picturesqueness; (4) sprightly decorativeness; and, if we possess the background in the traditions of painting against which to project this present work, we can add (5) creativeness—*i.e.*, an imitation of no one.

Looking at the Glackens from the standpoint of creativeness, we find nothing in it that is to be found in paintings by any other artist. Instead, it indirectly *recalls* the work of others. Goya (*e.g.*, Plate 20), Degas (*e.g.*, Plate 22) and Daumier (*e.g.*, Plate 13) are brought to mind by the presentation of figures in movement and of figures poised for movement and by the fact that these figures are subtly, yet convincingly, conveyed by the characteristics and interrelationships of the picture units, rather than by representational factors alone. But, while the Glackens recalls these masters of illustrative expressiveness, the sprightly aliveness introduced in the Glackens is not theirs.

In like fashion, the decorativeness of "Belport" recalls the work of the Impressionists. But this element has been so qualified by Glackens that what is theirs of decorative brightness becomes his by, in part, his injecting assertive punctuations of darks into it—a feature that Glackens shares, here, with the early work of Manet (*e.g.*, Plate 88), with the difference that, when Manet used those dark punctuations, he did not, as Glackens does, use them in a context of bright colors. And the aliveness of Glackens' color, even though it recalls Renoir's —specifically, of the type of Renoir painting represented by such canvasses as "Red Boat" (Plate 92) and "Guernsey" (Plate 94)—is also Glacken's own, as it is made to be subservient to the sprightly, perky, picturesque animation of the illustrative design, which is not the circumstance in Renoir.

Also to be mentioned now, but discussed more fully later on, is that unity, too, is achieved in this Glackens in a personal manner, following no simple academic rule nor subscribing to any academic manner of doing. Nor is it

obviously established. Our eye is kept on the go, but only within the confines of the canvas. For all its activity, the picture is contained.

Now that we know, in a general way, what Glackens was after, what, in "Belport," the characteristics of his design were, the way is open to see how, for the sake of achieving that design, he used his plastic means* instrumentally, how he made them be and do what his intent, his concern, his design, his controlling idea, the end he had in view, required.

Glackens' plastic use of color† in the canvas under study yields those general meanings that we have already noted as being a part of Glackens' and Prendergast's common store of expressed values—to recall, freshness, a high-key tonality, a domination of a bluish hue, with a brightness and a luminosity overall. To make color contribute to his illustrative interest, his kind of illustration, Glackens distributes it in small units that punctuate and sparkle, and he does this in such a way that, if we were to squint at the picture or to turn it upside down in order to diminish or eliminate our awareness of the subject, we would get from the color alone a measure of information—the freshness, the aliveness, the sparkle, the all-over activity of many small units.

Color, as does a tone of voice, bespeaks a mood. From the kind of color we find in the Glackens, we do not an-

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*The painter's plastic means include all that he selects and uses instrumentally—color, light, line, etc., as well as brush work, traditions, subject, and so forth. A detailed examination of the meaning of "plastic" as applied to the artist's means appears in "Three Aspects of Art," by V. de Mazia, in the Autumn, 1975, issue of *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion Station, Pa., pp. 10–12 ftn. Briefly, the term refers to the malleability of the means, their capacity to be altered as needed, and also to the fact that, as relationships are set up among them, each has a plastic effect upon the others in the sense of bringing about changes in their nature according to the relationships created.

†Color is one of the painter's plastic means. It can be made to appear to be of this or of that sort (bright, dark, structural, superficial, etc.), and it acts plastically on the character of light (warms it, cools it, etc.), of line (it can blur it or sharpen it, etc.), of space (it can send it back or bring it forward, etc.), and so on.

ticipate and do not get any profoundly dramatic or deeply stirring sense of power, intensity, depth—as the color alone provides in, say, the work of Tintoretto (*e.g.*, Plate 62), El Greco (*e.g.*, Plate 27) and Daumier (*e.g.*, Plate 13). With the sort of "voice," of color, in "Belport," we are led to expect something cheerful, light, sprightly, a gently staccato excitement. This is an illustratively expressive use of color in a plastic, an instrumental, sense.

The illustrative aspect of the Glackens painting is furthered by still other ways in which the color is handled. For one thing, the individual hues depicting the components of the various episodes play a major part in making the subject facts precise: the sail, for instance, is a *blue* sail; the bathing cap, a *red* bathing cap; the underside of the float is *orange*; the bathing suit is *blue*; the jersey is *red;* and so on. In this, the units retain a feeling of their color being "local"—that is, of being the color that was there as an aspect of the subject facts. Actually, for all his borrowings from the Impressionists, who abolished "local" color, Glackens, here, not only uses it, but stresses it, dotting his "i"s and crossing his "t"s, so to speak, by making the blue of the sail more blue, the red of the bathing cap more red than they would ever appear to be at the distance from which they are presented to the viewer. And, in addition to its rôle in illustrating the subject facts, this feature—identifying "local" color—acts to create a dramatic activity among the color constituents of the picture and, once more, contributes to the here-and-now and ongoing character of the scene.

Illustrative information is also conveyed in this Glackens by the shapes, however simplified these may be, of the color units and by the varying degree of thinness and thickness, transparency and opacity of the pigment of which they are made—a manner of doing that succinctly and directly adds on to their illustrative identity. Color depicting water is translucent; in the figures, slide, etc., color is opaque; and in the clouds it appears porously dense. On the whole, the color has a solidity and a weight sufficient for Glackens' needs. Solidity and weight are there, but not emphatically so, yielding, rather, to the illustrative interest,

so that the viewer's attention may focus on the "what's what," the "what's doing at this particular time and no other" that the painting tells of.

The activity of the Glackens color units, predominantly small in size, as we mentioned earlier, endows the canvas with an overall sprightly, perky vivaciousness that is both intrinsically picturesque, thanks in part to unexpected punctuating accents, and sensuously appealing, *i.e.,* decorative, in that the entire area of the canvas partakes of a shimmering interplay of gently crisp color notes. There is also a piquancy and, at times, a "bite" created by the few small, vivid, sharp and intense color units distributed here and there within the composition. Indeed, nowhere is there a dull moment or spot, nor, despite the ascendency of the blue tonality, any feeling whatsoever of monotony. Yet, with all the ebb and flow of color expressiveness and the picturesque accents, the intrinsic qualities of the color scheme are sustained throughout and help to unify the picture; the all-embracing blue tonality seems to gather unto itself the various color contrasts that enliven it, but does not diminish their effective picturesqueness and drama. What appears to be part of the prevailing blue, we discover, is green, lavender and even red!

The element of light, an aspect of color and another of the artist-painter's plastic means,* is, in the Glackens, of a kind that informs readily of a daytime outdoor scene; *i.e.,* it, too, like the color, helps to enforce the illustrative aspect of the painting. It is not merely light, but, specifically, bright sunlight, sunlight that reaches everywhere, even into the shadows. More particularly, it informs of a warmish-cool, sunlit, wettish atmosphere, and it also helps to say what is what of the narrative by its relationship to color. The light penetrates, for example, the area that says water, sparkles on it and conveys a message of white caps. It is reflected off the slide and gives emphasis to the statement

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*Light can be made to appear to be of this or of that sort (bright, dark, clear, hazy, etc.), and it acts plastically on the character of color (it can intensify or mute it, etc.), of space (it can send it back or bring it forward, fill it with atmosphere or make it clear, etc.), and so on.

of solid plank. It helps in the telling of the putt-putting of the motor boat, the water splashing of the foreground figure, the blowing of the skirt of the figure on the pier, the flatness of the area that says beach, the texture of the projecting clouds. And there are two sources of light, as if there were two suns shining on the scene: one sun striking the slide from the front and establishing there an important focus; and the other sun illuminating the figures on the float from behind and helping to silhouette their shapes, thus abetting their illustrativeness.

Light also plays a rôle in modelling the float and the clouds, as well as in setting these and other units in space. And the small accents of light, sprinkled, as they are, here and there, spread a sense of aliveness throughout and, together with bits of intensified color, lead our eye through and into space. This pattern of light at one and the same time contributes to the unification of the painting and, by the unexpected accents it provides, lends impetus to the picturesqueness of the total composition.

Altogether, the element of light in "Belport" is intrinsically sensuous, not only by its own distinctive sparkle, but because almost everywhere it functions as color, and color, almost everywhere, has a content of light. These elements are, in short, part and parcel of each other, with a resulting enrichment of their sensuousness.

There are, however, two areas that fall down from the point of view of the integration of color with light. For one of them, we may, as a supercriticism—*i.e.,* a noting of a fault in the instrumental use of the means, but one that does not seriously detract from the aesthetic significance of the work as a whole—point to the failure of the white spots on the water at the upper left of the canvas to merge with the substance they help to create. The spots there appear to be on, not in or one with, the color of the water—a lack which is all the more evident if we compare those white spots with the units of light which help depict the ripples and the splash of water in the foreground area. In mitigation of this deficiency is the fact that the spots are small, in the distance and more or less absorbed in the overall luminosity of the scene. The other, more telling,

instance of a failure in the instrumental structural merging of light occurs in a few of the highlighting strokes on the slide. True, a focus, which they provide, is needed at their site for accentuating the picturesque de-centering of the float, and their blatancy is somewhat lessened by the intensity of the color luminosity around them. Still, they function, we might say, not unlike the word "ever" does in an exaggerated statement of preference, as "It's the best thing I *ever* saw." Even so, unity in the Glackens is assured by the flood of light and the all-encompassing, homogeneous mass of color and light—both effects adapted, as we indicated earlier, from the Impressionists.

Among other borrowings from the Impressionists' innovations which Glackens adapts for meeting the needs of his design in this painting is, as also already noted, the Impressionists' distortion of receding space so that it yields a backdrop effect. In the Glackens, it is a backdrop predominantly of light made up of sky and water—that silhouettes the descriptive shapes given to figures and things and, correspondingly, lays stress upon the illustrativeness of the many subject facts.

The character of the line, yet another of the painter's plastic means,* is, in the Glackens, similarly adapted to answer the requirements of the picture purpose. Outline effected by contact of color units, for instance, not only serves to separate and to shape, but also helps to draw out what is essential to Glackens' illustrative interest. Together with color and light, it contributes to the drawing of the figures, helps to say figures in movement or poised for movement and, although highly simplified, gives a thoroughgoing sense of completeness.

All artists simplify. While there is skill and visual memory involved in telling all, there is no art because there is no selection from a particular point of interest and, therefore, no individuality. To know what to leave out and what to

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*Line can be made to appear to be of this or of that sort (thin, thick, curvilinear, rectilinear, etc.), and it acts plastically on the character of color (it can shape it into areas, it can transform a two-dimensional unit into a volume, etc.), of space (it can send it back or bring it forward, etc.), and so on.

retain for one's purpose is of the greatest importance in art, as it is in expression in any medium. In "The Music Lesson" (Plate 29), Matisse, for example, simplifies the area of water, thereby allowing it to function as a broad horizontal band, patterned with a large linear motif and lining up vertically with several other broad bands, each one contributing its own patterning motif to the decorativeness of the total painting. Renoir, on the other hand, in "Red Boat" (Plate 92), simplifies the area of the water in such a way that it is its depth and glow that are emphasized.

Glackens is interested in activity of a certain kind, and he simplifies the water differently from the way either Matisse or Renoir does. Under his hand, the depth of the water and the decorative pattern of its surface are made unimportant in comparison to the illustrative pattern, which partakes of a gently choppy rhythm of ripples and white caps that helps to carry on the descriptive picture theme. Likewise for the sake of the design, the figures are simplified as to their detail and their three-dimensionality, so that they may state more directly, by their illustrative shape, what they are and what they do at the time of their depiction.

The linear pattern in the Glackens is pronounced, thanks to the fact that the shapes have become bands, and the bands play against each other in contrasting directions, creating an overall linear activity that is communicated even by the brush strokes. Part of the animation that characterizes the picture makeup is due to the outlines of things, for these outlines are jagged, broken—rather than continuous, fluid or sweeping—with quick changes in their directions that make for a sense of quick action. Yet the outlines are not rigid, for, as they move along their particular directions, color and light frequently overflow the borders which the line designates and go off into the surrounding space. The result is a slight blurring of the outline, which adds onto the feeling of color ambiance or atmosphere of the whole scene, without, however, undermining the outline's needed fact-depicting function.

Both the pattern of the linear element in this painting and the fact that it is derived from color relationships con-

tribute to the decorativeness of the canvas. Simultaneously, the picturesqueness and the feeling of activity are enhanced by the variety provided by unexpected linear features—the "legs" of the pier and the bands and stripes that say legs, arms, bodies, ladder, etc., on the float.

Compositional integration is equally well supported by the linear factor, which occurs, with a sense of sequency, everywhere—in the linear pattern of the striped jersey that "climbs" onto the float at the lower left, in the figures, the posts, the slide, the motorboat, the two sailboats, in the slanting linear movement of the clouds, in the ripples of the water and, in the foreground, in the water splash and in the brush work throughout. The pervasive compositional activity of the linear constituents is brought to a final standstill by the strictly vertical units on each side of the painting—the distant upright sail at the left and the upright post at the extreme right.

As we have already mentioned, the linear pattern and its action are carried down even into the pattern and the action of the very brush strokes. What we saw to happen with the line with regard to its implementing of the identification and activity of the subject facts happens also with the technique,* one more of the artist-painter's plastic means. The strokes help to splash the water, to blow the skirt, to climb onto the float and to slide down the sliding board. Were we to change, for example, the slanting direction of the strokes on the slide to a horizontal patterning, the figure at the top, instead of being seen as able and ready to move downward, would appear to be held, set, in her place. And, all along, the strokes and dabs are so handled that the size of each, its width, its length, its direction, its degree of perceptibility are put to the task of identifying things and their activities. The strokes are adapted to what each is required to say—a short curve to

*Technique, the manner of applying pigment to the canvas, can be made to be of one or of another sort, and its own character directly affects—is plastic in its effect on—the color it puts down (it can make it appear smooth of surface or rugged, etc.), hence, also, the various aspects—light, line, space—that color can offer.

say ripple, a shorter curve or a dot to say choppy crest of a ripple. By their shapes and directions, they pep up the beach area and help to say trees and houses. In the clouds, the touches are small, and they overlap and vibrate within the density they aid in creating. In the body of the float itself, they model for the sake of making a volume, while in the sails and the figures they are made to stress shape, and, in general, they carry out, by the directions of their application to the canvas, the directions of the movement wanted.

With all this variety of identity and function of the brush work, sufficient basic similarity prevails in the character of the strokes, so that, despite the varied patterns they give rise to, a sort of continuous weave, which spreads over the entire surface of the painting, helps to tie the episodic areas together and to unify the entire composition, but not without a scattering of picturesque accents which enliven picturesquely the nevertheless continuous surface of the decorative weave.

Adhering to the plan followed in this analytical study of Glackens' "Belport," we shall now turn our attention to how the artist, in this painting, handles space* and its correlative, space composition, so that these elements, too, answer to the needs of the picture design and, by so doing, *i.e.*, by so acting instrumentally, themselves acquire a distinctive, new, created-for-that-purpose character.

Three-dimensional space in the Glackens is produced in a number of ways—by perspective, by a blurring of outlines and by interrupted views—and yields a feeling of sunlit outdoors and of wetness. Large in scale and extending into infinity, it conveys also a sense of being nearby, with the focus of interest occurring in the foreground by way of the dense and complex grouping of active units at the left and the simpler grouping of sparse units at the right. The areas of the float, of the swimmers, of the pier, of the

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*Space is another of the painter's plastic means. It can be made to appear to be of this or of that sort (deep, shallow, clear, atmospheric, etc.), and it acts plastically on the character of color (it can pale it, etc.), of size (it can diminish it, etc.), of distinctness of outline or shape (it can blur it, etc.), and so on.

beach and houses, of the clouds, of the sailboat at the center and the motorboat and small sailboat at the upper left function as unemphatic, yet determined, gentle stepping stones in the recession of the compositional rhythm. At the same time, the near-at-hand units are given significance by the distortion of the receding plane of water into a more or less vertical backdrop, which is made to appear continuous with the vertical plane of the sky. Thus is the distance brought forward, causing it dramatically to set off the shapes of the figures, etc., as it also helps to impart to the entire presentation an episodic character. The units, however, are set *in* space as well as set off *by* it. They enter it and make up a definite spatial pattern, an in-and-out organization, as we might find with chessmen on a board or the T-formation in a football game.

In terms of its general nature, the space composition of the Glackens is lively and decorative. It is made up of many small units forming, as we just noted, patterns in three-dimensional space. By their arrangement, the variety in their location, these patterns lend to the space a compositional piquancy and a sprightly, perky picturesqueness.

On a larger scale, there is a series of pyramids making up among themselves a comprehensively organized compositional framework. On the left is the compact and complex, lacily perforated pyramid of the total float unit, and on the right, a similar, though much less compact and complex, pyramidal formation moving upward from the water splash in the foreground to its apex in the tree on the beach and down obliquely on the right to the vertical post of the pier near the edge of the canvas. Acting as a hinge between these two pyramids is the small pyramidal formation of the central sailboat.

The clouds, likewise, participate vitally in the space composition. From the horizon area, they project upward and forward towards the right and set up two important, though subtle, focal points in a comprehensive, more or less circular sequence of orderly, punctuating units in the contained organization of the whole painting—the pier on the right, the splash of water at the bottom, the float on the left, the motorboat and small sailboat left of the float,

and the clouds that carry the movement across the top and lead back, by way of the distant trees at the right, to the pier. This sequence of punctuating elements follows the boundaries of the canvas and lines up its contents as in a *tondo*, a circular, formation within a quadrangular container (see Compositional Diagram, Plate 102).

All of the constituents of the space organization in "Belport" are instrumentally used to help to inform, by their nature and the nature of their activity, of the nature of the subject facts involved, singly and as groups—a compact, multi-actioned crowding on the float; a quiet, solitary figure, surrounded by subtly rendered space, in the sailboat; a brisk play in space among the few bathers in the foreground; a peppy, in-and-out spatial activity in the water; and a sweeping upward of the two main clouds. Correspondingly, an intrinsic interest, an aliveness and a picturesqueness result from the variety in the pace—the speedups, the pauses, the slowdowns—afforded by the placement of all of these subsidiary space compositions as Glackens tells his story.

Of major importance to the expression of aliveness and picturesqueness is the de-centered position of the most active of the picture units—the float, with the figures, etc., on it, which pulls to the left. As one in the series of pyramids mentioned above, this unit is related to the pyramid on the right in such a way that each holds the other up in poised movement and counterbalances it.

Despite the de-centering of the float, there are no breaks in the sensing of balanced sequence, because of the repetition across from side to side of essential features that carry through. Our eye is not allowed to rest. It is led on and gets, in the new unit, much of what it has had, but still remains interested by the novelty it each time finds. That is to say, the balance is a balance of equivalents.

The basic point of our study of "Belport" has been to show, among other things, that all that entered as material of Glackens' experience—tradition and subject included as part of his means—was used plastically as an instrument

to his purpose of realizing his design. What he did is not unlike an actor adjusting his tone of voice (the artist's color, perhaps), causing his eyes to flash (the artist's light), styling his gestures (possibly the artist's line and brush strokes) and his movements on the stage (the artist's space composition) for the sake of developing the characterization that the rôle he plays requires and of making his acting ring true. In the Glackens, each of the means was made to be what it is because of what was needed to achieve the picture purpose. The color is not just illustrative color, but *this* illustrative color, with *these* intrinsic features. It is not just a blue tonality, but *this* blue tonality. And it is not just the Impressionists' light and technique or Manet's distortions or Renoir's sparkle, but each borrowed element has been adapted and given character as a tool, an instrument well fitted and specifically created for the meaning sought now by Glackens in this canvas.

It is easy to agree that the "camera-clicker," the mere photographer, just *takes* a picture, whereas the artist-photographer *makes* a picture. By the same token, the mere illustrator in painting, like the "camera-clicker," simply *takes*, so to speak, a picture, while the artist-painter *makes* a picture. William Glackens, in "Belport," gives us the subject facts and *makes* of them a picture, a work of art.

We have seen a number of things which Glackens had in common with Prendergast, but that were shared with Prendergast only before Glackens' hand, eye, feelings, imagination, interests and personality had started to work on and with them from the point of view of his design and to use them for the accurate, complete expression not of what *was* that anyone, given the opportunity, would see and say, but of what *is* now on the canvas, *i.e.*, the objectification of what Glackens saw as he perceived significant aspects and factors from the vantage of his interest.

The picture does show what Glackens saw, as all painters paint what they see, insofar as seeing is understood to stand for perceiving imaginatively. Glackens, indeed, saw what the painting shows us in the same way that the kitten and

the cockateel saw what was of interest to each of them as they looked at the pencil or, with less limitation of personality, what Veronese, Tintoretto, Rubens, Watteau and Renoir saw when they used the arc-stroke that they each re-created in the paintings discussed earlier in this essay. Imaginative perception, because it is entered into with an interest, a background, etc., is always personal, is always an active process and always results from that all-important interacting, transacting, between what the subject is for all and what there is of interest, feelings, imagination, knowledge, etc., in the individual no one else is or can possibly be.*

In its most pointed form, the import of the preceding detailed analysis of Glackens' "Belport" can be stated as

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*From what has been said, one might be tempted to draw the conclusion that the end justifies the means, at least in art. Equally, one might be inclined to follow the foolish advice of many an art teacher to "say it in whatever way, by whatever means"—an absurd admonition if ever there was one, since the goal, the end, does not, cannot, exist without the means, is part of a continuum with the means, as the means are, in actuality, the beginning of the end or the end in the process of becoming that end. As John Dewey, in effect, put it, every end reached becomes a new beginning towards another end.

To say it in a different way, the end in view, the design, directs, controls the selection, the use and the organization of all the means. And that end in view, that design, functions, figures at the very start of the creative process of perception and continues to function as the ever-guiding idea, but not as a complete, unchanging mental image simply to be reproduced on the canvas. A picture, a work of art, is never entirely or precisely forecast or preconceived, for the idea or theme or spark, generally vague at first, that starts the artist off is itself a live thing. It develops, changes, grows as the experience of the artist unfolds. In brief, it is, itself, plastic. And, as the original idea finds its way, step by step, to its final objective crystalization, the design is constantly active, continuously operating on what is within that artist—his feelings, imagination, etc.—and what is part of the world of everybody—brush stroke, blue, red, Impressionism, water scene.

The moral for the art student is this. If he has something to say that can be said in the medium of expression that he has selected and that he feels deeply, clearly about and that is his own, he should know that it is he who will have to find, invent, discover, by trial and error if need be, create and decide on the color, light, line, technique, space and organization he should use. For, if he understands at least one aspect of our discussion, he understands that it cannot possibly be that using someone else's color *as is*, someone else's light *as is*, etc., can express what *he*, the student, feels, what *he* discovers and now wants to say. Imitating someone else's color or manner of doing to express one's own message is as nonsensical as trying to sob or cry like Aunt Margie when *oneself* is hurt or sad or trying to cough and sneeze like Uncle George when it is *one's own* throat and nose that itches or tickles.

follows. The artist's creativeness applies no less to the means employed, to what he made them be and do, to what they became and are now, than to the end result, the picture, for the creativeness of which the means themselves were created. For all their debt to and affinity with features found in other artists' works, Glackens' color, light, line, and so on—all that he used—were used instrumentally, and it is in so having been used and, therefore, in so doing what they now do that their own new identity was born. Handsome is indeed as handsome does.

d) PRENDERGAST'S WATER SCENE

Pursuing our demonstration of the meaning and function of instrumentalism, we shall see how Prendergast, in "Revere Beach" (Fold-out Plate 111), used his material, much of which was the same as, or very much akin to, that used by Glackens, for the sake of saying *his,* Prendergast's, say and for expressing what *he,* Prendergast, saw, in the sense of perceiving, what in the episode was of significance to *him,* from an aesthetic standpoint, as *he*, Prendergast, with *his* background, imagination, feelings, etc., experienced it. For, though both Prendergast and Glackens experienced basically the same sort of subject, the interest, the motivation, the point of view differed for each. Their individual investigation, therefore, shifted, as did their selections, additions, organizations, and so forth, with a result not unlike that depicted in the Japanese movie *Rashomon,* in which a murder takes place and each witness to it, because of personal reasons or motivations, recounts an entirely different story of it.* And, as there was the murder in common for the witnesses in *Rashomon,* so there was for Prendergast and Glackens the water scene. And, as those witnesses told different stories of that murder, so do Prendergast and Glackens tell different aesthetic stories of that water scene—once again, a purpose guiding the use of the means employed and instrumentalism re-creating the

*As can happen, for that matter, with witnesses to any sort of event in daily life.

means themselves. Once again, the kitten, the cockateel and the pencil.

At the beginning of our comparative survey, we noted that Prendergast's main interest in "Revere Beach" lies elsewhere than in the illustrative aspect of the scene. He is struck less with the subject facts as subject facts than with certain general effects that subject facts can be responsible for and can produce. Many who are aware of this difference between Prendergast and Glackens are content to dismiss the problem with the "explanation" that Prendergast simply talks another language, but this is not so. Both artists talk color, not because they use paint, but because they express what they want to say in terms of qualities intrinsic to color.*

Prendergast talks color just as Glackens does, but it can be said that he makes use of another vocabulary, so to speak, other figures of speech, geared to *his* sort of expressiveness. That is, each man says something of his own, and what one says is not the same as what the other says, hence, each uses the means of color differently.

For one thing, Prendergast is, as we pointed out, less illustrative in what he says than is Glackens, or, rather, less obviously illustrative, less directly illustrative. It is tempting to attribute this distinction to the fact that Prendergast seems, at first blush, to include fewer details in his telling of the scene, but this does not really account for it.† Indeed, despite that initial impression of the relative number of details, we would be hard put to demonstrate that there

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*There are legions of painters who use paint, pigments, and do not, for that, talk in terms of what color can say. In this category are, for instance, the mere illustrators, such as Winslow Homer (*e.g.*, Plate 76), in whose work color, doing little or no more than describing the color of the things depicted, remains but a label, a mere identifying device—the sky is gray; the water is green—and that's all.

†Nor is the idea accurate that fewer details mean necessarily a less illustrative statement. In themselves, details are not an inevitable feature of illustration. Daumier, for example, includes a meager number of details, yet his work (*e.g.*, Plate 13) is strongly illustrative; and the page from *The Book of Kells* shown on Plate 35 is replete with detail, but is essentially detailed decoration, not detailed illustration. It is, in short, always a matter of what details are selected and how they are used that determines their status.

are actually fewer in the Prendergast than in the Glackens. It could be that Prendergast incorporates fewer details that describe, that depict, subject facts, but not, for that, are there fewer overall. And, whatever sort the details in the Prendergast be, they are themselves, apart from their illustrative capacity, much involved, as we shall show later, in contributing to the decorative expressiveness of the total presentation.

The general impact we get from "Revere Beach" is one of color—color as patches, or color blobs, that contrast with each other in their hues, their tones, their sizes and their shapes. Their continuous succession carries our eye on and through the entire area of the painting. Wherever our eye starts, it is led, jumpily but gently, on in all directions, yet not in any open-ended or uncontained fashion, as our study will also point out later.

There is, then, drama and activity, but, because of the nature of the units and of the relationships among the patches, the drama and activity are of a quiet sort. Part of the character of this color drama comes from the staccato action of the rhythm created by the patches and blobs. It is one blob or patch and then another, with the identity of each blob or patch quietly, but nonetheless positively, retained.

The patches function like slices, areas in space, planes that succeed each other in space—an effect Prendergast owes to Cézanne, as in "Rocks and Trees" (Plate 41) and the watercolor "Path in the Woods" (Plate 106). Unlike what happens in Cézanne, in whose work the one-by-one rhythm of the patches is either of constructive planes of volumes or of individual planes that slice up and recede into the depth of space, the activity in the Prendergast stresses the jump from patch to patch, or color blob to color blob, for an allover patterning of the surface, as opposed to Cézanne's primary effect of three-dimensionality, be it of volumes or of the space depth itself.

Within the pervasive gentle staccato rhythm of Prendergast's color blobs, with its scherzo-rondo character—a rhythm more briefly punctuated, that is, than an andante—there are two main compositional factors or themes: (1)

the background, or, better, the setting, since what we are referring to—the sky, water and beach—extends to the very foreground; and (2) what the setting sets off.*

Let us see what each of these two main compositional factors consists of and what each accomplishes by the manner of their relationships. First, of the setting: it is a horizontal oblong, extending all the way across the canvas and from top to bottom. It is made up of an upward-moving series of parallel horizontal bands and stripes which, by their juxtaposition, their color and their tone, give, in their ensemble, the effect of an upright plane or a backdrop screen that, paralleling, as it does, the plane of the canvas, tends to close up the space recession near to the foreground of the scene, right behind the figures, and produces what is called a mural type of composition.†

With this mural type of organization, the horizon in "Revere Beach" is raised to near the upper edge of the canvas, and the plane of land-and-sea, which normally would recede horizontally, is tilted forward from the back. That is, the plane of land-and-sea is shown as if viewed from above, and, as a consequence, it assumes a vertical position in the composition.

Such a tipping of the plane of the setting counters the head-on showing of the figures; the figures, that is, appear

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*It might be asked whether all paintings are not organized on such a basis as this. In fact, not many are. Glackens' "Belport" (Fold-out Plate 104), for instance, can be described in this fashion only if we ignore the relationships that make one factor go into, be set in, the space of the other, as well as being set off by it. With full-length portraits, we are more likely to find such a compositional arrangement, as, for instance, in Velásquez' "Portrait of a Buffoon of Philip IV" (Plate 33), wherein, as in the Prendergast, the setting tends to parallel what it sets off and extends to and includes part of the immediate foreground.

†*Muralis* or *murus,* a Latin word, means "wall." A mural composition, accordingly, retains a sense of the wall or of the plane of the canvas or panel on, against or immediately in front of which the scene appears to happen, as, for example, in Giotto's "St. Francis Blessing the Birds" (Plate 17) and in the Byzantine "Lamentation" (Plate 16), in contrast to the sense of opening directly into deep space, of being viewed as if through a window bordered by the edges of the canvas or by the frame, as is seen in paintings of the Renaissance (*e.g.*, Plates 18 and 19). One manner of doing is not aesthetically more desirable than the other. The aesthetic merit of either will always depend on the aesthetic merit of the purpose it serves and on how it is used instrumentally to accomplish that service.

to be looked at from their own level—a distortion of that law of perspective which consists in considering and rendering things in a single format by presenting them as perceived from a fixed point of reference, instead of, as is done in "Revere Beach," presented from a varying point of reference. This distortion in the Prendergast gives rise to a combination of illustratively contradictory, albeit aesthetically constructive, effects.

One of the effects resulting from the shifting perspective in "Revere Beach" is that it lends to the scene, as it usually does wherever it is used, a feeling of activity—not an illustrative activity of figures in action, but a pictorial activity that is sensed by the viewer in his perception of what is before him as he refers what he sees to his own experiences of having looked at things from, in turn, above and head-on. It is a "dynamic," a self-generated, activity that involves the relationships both among the picture units and between those units and the viewer, rather than an activity created by any of the illustrative features of the gestures and body postures portrayed.

The drama attending this distortion of perspective in the Prendergast painting is muted by the fact that the figures, etc., in the foreground and the boats, etc., in the setting are all depicted with little or no modelling, thus appearing as more or less frontal color patches. All tend, therefore, to parallel each other, as well as the basic plane of the canvas. Thus do the relationships between the setting and what is set off affect the character of the dynamic activity induced by the distorted perspective: the activity is both emphasized *and* held down.

Accentuating the contrast between setting and what is set off is Prendergast's use of short, briefly punctuating color blobs and patches, which build up the figures, against an opposing theme of long, linear motifs in the makeup of the setting—not unlike the playing of short notes on the piano against long, linear elements on a violin.* But,

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**E.g.*, Mozart's Sonata in B-Flat (K. 10) for violin and pianoforte—most pertinently, perhaps, its third movement.

notwithstanding the drama of this contrast and materially tempering it, a continuous rhythm of one-with-each-other, in-and-out or back-and-forth blob-blob and strip-strip makes setting and what it sets off kin, as, together, they occasion a pattern, with transferred values of tapestry or of mosaics or of a beach of pebbles, that spreads over the total surface of the canvas.

This pervasive pattern is, however, far from remaining two-dimensional and merely decorative, for it involves a degree of three-dimensionality, adequate for Prendergast's purpose, in the units themselves and in their relationships to each other in space. The pattern, moreover, is also expressive of a number of broad human values by the intrinsic qualities of the color, the light, the line, and so forth, and by the various activities deriving from specific relationships established among its components, as our analysis will indicate.

Sharing in their exchange of such characteristics as verticality and horizontality, the setting and what it sets off collaborate in producing the allover, all-encompassing pattern just mentioned. To wit, the figures, predominantly vertical in terms of both their individual shapes and the main color patches that make them up, at the same time follow each other processionally, laterally, horizontally, across the width of the canvas, with this countering horizontal motion reinforced by the horizontally directed skirt hems, waistlines and strip-like arms, cuffs, mules' underbellies and by the horizontal strokes that, here and there, pattern the areas. Reciprocally, the predominantly horizontal bands and stripes that make up the setting proceed in an upward direction, one after the other across the height of the picture, over a vertically-set plane which they thereby establish; and segments of that setting, briefly seen between the foreground units, take on an identity of vertically directed strips.

With all this interplay of characteristics that tends to make the two main compositional factors kin, the contrast between verticality and horizontality, nevertheless, undeniably persists, and it lends an architectural character to the structure of the total framework. The rigidity and an-

gularity that such a framework usually entails are, here, practically non-existent, as they are tempered by Prendergast's gentle, though relatively static, curves and by the fact that rhythmic relationships among small color units in both setting and what it sets off—among the boat sails and the women's garments, for instance, among the crests of the ripples, the boats, the cliffs and the figures' arms, legs, sashes, etc.—produce a constant back-and-forth activity, a play, of patterning patches and blobs.

In broad terms, the above discussion accounts for the manner in which, in "Revere Beach," the two main compositional factors of what served the artist as his subject interact and function in reference to each other—a manner, hence, also, a result, markedly different from the manner and the result seen earlier to be the case in Glackens' "Belport." Summarily to recall, in the organization of "Belport," and not in that of "Revere Beach," one main factor—the float with its figures, etc., as well as the pier unit—enters, is set *into,* the other factor, or, more precisely, enters the spaciousness that characterizes that other factor. Moreover, the viewer's attention is drawn to the large, compact grouping at the left, while his attention is also pulled, in ricochet fashion, to the right by the pyramidal formation of the pier and bathers, leading to a stabilizing, yet enlivening, effect of a balance of equivalents.

True, in the Glackens, as in the Prendergast, the perspective of the setting is distorted in that the horizon is raised and the plane of the water or of the land-and-water is tilted forward from the back towards the top. But, while in the Glackens that distortion is used as a means to silhouette the shapes of the figures, etc., and to emphasize, by so doing, the illustrative significance of their individual activities, in the Prendergast, the makeup of the setting completes the particular activity of the color units as such.

In one and the other water scene, the instrumental use of the two main compositional factors was determined by, and successfully brings about, one of the prominent features of the specific picture intent, which each one of the main factors is made to serve—the calm, evenly paced rhythm of the panoramic display, the frieze, in the Pren-

dergast; the perky drama, the sprightly aliveness of the depicted scene in the Glackens.

As decorative as is the pervasive pebbly pattern in "Revere Beach," it is also meaningful by what the units are and do and, therefore, bring into the pattern. The first rock, for instance, at the lower right corner, with its constructive, blobby, semi-coil brush strokes, is set in relatively inactive, empty surroundings, and its beat carries over to the beats of the rocks at its left in a one-two-three sequence of not unsimilar, yet varied, beats and, presently, to a compact series of smaller, less distinct beats that seem, without actually doing so, to overlap, intertwine and roll on into a pebbly band of jewel-like punctuations along the base of the picture and to interweave in a manner suggestive of a fugue.

As often happens in music, there is, here, along the base of the canvas, a clear-cut set of a few first beats—the one-two-three beats of the rocks just referred to, in this instance—that introduce the general motif of the theme, which is then picked up and deployed and elaborated upon by other beats, with the essential character of the motif retained. Stabilizing this rolling-on activity along the base border is an emphasis in color and/or tone, placed at a few strategic points—one at the center of the rolling band and a few towards and at each end. The emphasis at each end anchors the lower angle of an arched pyramid formed by accentuations along linear sequences that create a large crescent- or fan- or open-umbrella-shaped container with its apex at the dark parasol near the top center of the canvas. It is, in actuality, a modified pyramid, a pyramid with its apex rounded, *i.e.,* an arch, and, because of its crescent or open-umbrella or fan formation, it functions less rigidly than a straightforward pyramid would.

This subtly modified pyramid provides, in "Revere Beach," an important and needed holding-together of the composition. For, what would otherwise be but a slice out of a continuous panorama, an ongoing rhythm of color units that could be extended or cut at will, is held in, contained, by the fan-shaped arch that encloses it. It is complemented in its holding-in function by the "sandwich"

relationship produced by the roll of "pebbles" at the base of the canvas and the echoing roll of color dabs that say "clouds" across the upper edge of the picture—all of which, acting together, help to hold in and contain the broad, horizontal band of figures and setting.

Equally vital to both the unification and the distinctive identity of "Revere Beach" as are these pyramids are various smaller units that play a rôle in modifying the spread of the compositional panorama and that, at the same time, bring into the picture an assortment of meaningful effects by way of their interrelationships. The parasol-units, for instance, are all set off by the blue-green of the sky, represent similar subject facts and have a similar, generally curvilinear shape, with a few of them repeating the crescent-fan formation of the all-inclusive pyramidal container above noted; and they all are part of the overall blobby or pebbly pattern that pervades the canvas. Each parasol, however, differs from the others in its color, its size and in the direction of its main axis—the last of these differences giving rise to a gently dynamic activity of color planes and blobs among them.

The center parasol-unit is the focus of the organization of the parasol-units, and a balance on each side of that center parasol is achieved, in part, by way of the sails of the boats seen between the parasols—rescue boats in a picture sense—so that the disbalance in the rhythmic sequence of the parasol-units that makes for drama is, to a degree, offset by an adequate balance of equivalents.

Over and above what it is as a subject fact and as a color unit, each of the parasols brings into the picture something of what it acquires of meaning through this or that subsidiary organization in which it participates—a circumstance that parallels that of, say, a group of students in a classroom that owes its identity not just to the *raison d'être* of the grouping (*art* students, *physics* students), but also to what each person brings to the group of what he is (athlete, chess player), of where he comes from (Canada, Germany, Mexico), of what he likes, and so forth.

The same is true of the parasol blobs. The first one on the right (above and slightly to the left of the first figure),

for instance, is tilted to the right and, by its slant, which lines up with that of the hairline of the woman standing to the right, is the upper part of the right-hand segment of a bracket enclosure that opens towards the left, which enclosure it helps to create in its relationship to that upright figure and to the downward slant towards the left that cuts across the lower right corner of the composition and "mirrors" the slant of the parasol. The parasol is also one of a sequence of beats, units of accentuated color and tone—hands, legs, etc.—that travel obliquely downward as they move from that parasol near the upper right to the accent of color and tone at the center bottom of the picture and upward from that low center to the parasol at the upper left, thereby effecting a "basket" or "cradle" formation or an inverted arch—yet another large-size container for the panoramic spread of the composition, in that its down-and-up staccato sweep holds in, albeit unobtrusively, that panoramic spread, as it also holds in, likewise unobtrusively, the verticality and horizontality that equally characterize the picture's frieze-like structure.

The parasol that we have just examined is instrumental to still another aspect of the composition of "Revere Beach." It functions as the apex of a narrow, slightly curved pyramid or pointed arch, the right side of which is partly cut off by the edge of the canvas and the left side of which reaches down, by a series of punctuating heads, etc., to below the hips of the figure lying down, right of center, at the base.

The second (counting from the right) parasol-unit is tilted towards the left and acts as the "head" of the vertical unit made up of the figure behind and the figure on the mule. It is also the apex of a subsidiary pyramid or pointed arch that rises from the lower right of the canvas and from the accented blob at the center of the base and overlaps the first pyramid at the right—again suggestive, in effect, of the overlapping phrases of a fugue.

Midway across the upper area of the painting is a third, relatively dark parasol blob, the focal center in the lateral sequence of the parasols. In its relationship to its immediate context, this parasol deflects the verticality of the

figure to which it belongs, pulls to the left and enters, by way of contrasts among the axial planes of each of the units involved, into a play in space with the standing figure beneath it, the group with the mule to the right, the little girl and the kneeling nurse to the left. It serves, moreover, as the capstone of another subsidiary pyramid or pointed arch—one anchored at the right on the third rock at the base and, at the left, on the foot of the figure seated at the lower left corner—that starts within and interlocks with the second pyramid noted, thus continuing the overlapping idea of a fugue, and provides, as already observed, the apex of the all-inclusive pyramid, or fan formation, which, interlocking with the "basket" formation, brings about, in the cental area of the canvas, a version of the "diamond" container (Diagram Plate 110).

The fourth parasol blob, a horizontal oval, acts, in a way, as a second head for the figure below it. By its shape and position, it adds an effect of height in that figure and emphasizes its frontal positioning, creating a dramatic contrast between its plane and the planes of the figures around it. And, once again, like the other parasol blobs, it functions as the apex of a subsidiary pyramid or pointed arch that overlaps or interlocks with the previous one, thereby perpetuating the fugue type of organization.

The interlocking of the subsidiary pyramids or pointed arches in "Revere Beach" is responsible for an effect of activity that results not from the illustrative information given, but from the structure of the picture itself. One pyramid or pointed arch moves on to the next as if a curved pyramid or pointed arch were perceived simultaneously in the various stages of its progress as it moves across the area of the canvas (see Diagram Plate 109).*

The next parasol, a circular blob to the left of the one just described, dips down in the row of parasols and is

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*The activity generated by the kind of overlapping of the pyramids or pointed arches in the Prendergast is akin to that deriving from the principle on which Futurism, or, as it is also called, Dynamism, is based—the idea involved in the effects produced by a stroboscopic camera, as shown in the photograph, reproduced on Plate 42, of Marcel Duchamp and in his picture "Nude Descending a Staircase" shown on Plate 43.

made a part of an upright unit that also includes the small figure below the parasol and the boat sail above it, thus becoming a participant in a rhythm that occurs throughout the canvas of tall and short vertical units—a kind of up-and-down activity in the general constructive plan.

Still one more link in this chain of subsidiary narrow-based pyramids or pointed arches is the one that has its left side cut off by the left edge of the canvas, with its apex the last parasol at the left. In its relationship to the figure below it, this parasol is at once an extension of that figure, adding to its height, and, by its slant, a means that helps the figure to appear to move into the picture. From the standpoint of the entire composition, it is the other top beat of the "basket" formation, and, together with the figure below it and the slant downward towards the right that cuts across the lower left corner, it completes the enclosure of the panoramic progression by acting as the upper segment of a bracket that opens towards the right.

In terms of their respective structural frameworks, then, there is a marked difference between the Glackens and the Prendergast renderings of the water scenes. Glackens', as we saw, was essentially based on three more or less angular, separate pyramids. In the Prendergast, it is a series of more or less curved pyramids, overlapping and interlocked (*cf.* Diagram Plates 102 and 109).

To put it more generally, each artist makes a different use of the pyramid, makes it achieve something else, uses it, in other words, as a tool, an instrument, to attain his specific end, uses it, in short, instrumentally and, by so doing, endows that pyramid with a specific significance—a pyramid that does *this,* a pyramid that does *that.* Nor is the pyramid in one picture the same as in the other, for each time it was created in accordance with the action needed.

Returning to the analysis of "Revere Beach": the architectural character of its framework is due in great measure to the preponderance, as already pointed out, of long verticals and horizontals, with the horizontality stressed at the bottom and top of the canvas and the verticality accentuated in the parasol-figure units.

The verticality is emphasized also by a distortion of the proportionate height in the rendering of the constituents of most of the figures, a rendering that produces a kind of elongation which allies the Prendergast, in this feature, to some early Byzantine works (*e.g.,* Plate 107). As in these Byzantine instances, the sense of elongation in the Prendergast comes largely from the use of what we might call ascending perspective, *i.e.,* a presentation of vertical units as if they were viewed from their base, achieved by diminishing the relative height of their parts as our eye moves up their height.* This incorporation of an ascending perspective acts with the aforementioned sense of frontality and of figures shown as if viewed on their own level to impart a picture activity, a dynamic drama, and it is a drama enhanced still more by a shift in the perspective from which the setting is presented, shown, as it is, as if seen from above. But, again, the drama created in this aspect, as in the other aspects, of Prendergast's picture is tempered by the one-with-each-other effect of the rela-

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*"Descending" would describe the perspective according to which the proportions of the main parts of a human figure appear to be rendered in some types of early African sculpture (*e.g.,* Plate 38) and of modern "Primitives" (*e.g.,* Plate 93). The African piece shown on Plate 39 may be said to produce effects of both ascending and descending perspective: the torso-head relationship is presented as if viewed from the lower part of the torso, and the torso-legs relationship as if viewed from the shoulders.

Incidentally, as a possibly pertinent aside, in some of Modigliani's figures (*e.g.,* Plate 36), which seem to be elongated as if from the use of distorted perspective, elongation is apparent only because each part of the figure has been thinned out, rather than actually elongated. Were we to restore the normal width of head, neck, torso, etc., no effect of elongation would remain.

One is, then, led to ponder the why and the how of, among many other instances, those long-torsoed, match-thin "stick-figures" depicted by pre-historic aborigines in Australia, and those tall, column-like figures that are set into the façades of Gothic cathedrals, and those figures of saints, long and willowy, in early Sienese paintings, and the dramatic, sinuous ones in El Greco, and the strongly directional elongated figures found occasionally in Cézanne, and the elevated torsos, as if the legs were on stilts, in the typical sculptured pieces of Giacometti—a fascinating study in itself, for the distinctive character on each occasion differs, and so does, naturally, the method that accomplishes it. And then there are figures, elongated, too, in one manner or another, that have and say nothing of any aesthetic validity because they have and say nothing beyond the fact that they happen to be elongated and . . . what of it?

tionships and the intrinsic positive-yet-gentle character of the constituents.

The overall oneness of the Prendergast is expressed not by way of the organization alone, by *how* the constituents are used, but also by way of *what* is used—the color, the light, the line, the pigment, the technique, etc.—to make them up. Color, for instance, has both a delicacy, a lightness, *and* a rugged solidity which, together, yield in their own fashion a feeling of gentle positiveness. At each step of the way among the color patches or blobs, there are contrasts of hue, but over all there is a cool, pearly bluishness, so that even the greens, the oranges, the purples are absorbed into the pervasive pearly-blue tonality.

This two-fold function of the color—to produce drama and to temper it—is reiterated, in their own terms, by the qualities of the other picture constituents. The paint itself, for example, combines a sensuous ruggedness *and* a delicacy, a positiveness *and* a gentleness and appears to be somewhat porous, grainy and gritty, *as well as* "buttery," of texture. Its texture and surface partake of the character of fresco painting and of tempera and, although semi-glossy, give a distinctive feeling, quite personal to Prendergast, of mat, unglazed ceramic. Contradictory as it may sound, a dry unctuousness prevails: the pigment is not juicy or fluid, but neither is it brittle or dry. Rather, it is dry, or "starchy," *and* moist, or "buttery," with its dryness keeping the color where it was applied—thus maintaining its identity as a blob or a patch—and its unctuousness providing a measure, or at least an appearance, of interpenetration and preventing hardness.

In itself, the pigment, then, expresses a rugged delicacy, and it fosters unity in the canvas by its sustained sensuousness and the delicate solidity it imparts throughout to the color units. Neither the color nor the light could do what it does without this specific kind of pigment.

As in Glackens' "Belport," in Prendergast's "Revere Beach" light floods the canvas and patterns it in the manner of the Impressionists. There is, nevertheless, this difference, that in the Prendergast light is restrained in the out-going of its brilliance and in its focal accentuation.

Instead of sparkling, as it does in the Glackens, light here is relatively muted. It is a merging of the bright light of the Impressionists (*e.g.,* Plate 90) and the muted light of the Venetians (*e.g.,* Plate 62), with a kinship, also, to the light in early frescoes (*e.g.,* Plate 17) in its evenly cool, dry opalescence. And it is light *of* the color, rather than, as is frequent in the Impressionists, light *on* the color. Together with color, light in "Revere Beach" creates a cool, pearly atmosphere that bathes the blobs and patches and their staccato patterning in a quiet shimmer.

Further in contrast to the effect of the light in Glackens' "Belport," the effect of the light in the Prendergast is much less directly informative, less directly illustrative. Within the pervasive, fluid, evenly-spread illumination are spots and patches of light which, with the blobs and patches of darker tones, set up their own staccato rhythm that metaphorically performs as does the rhythm of tapestry or embroidery stitches or the *tesserae* of mosaics—with an attending quiet aliveness, a spot-spot sequence, tempered by the overall delicacy and gentleness of the muted, pearly illumination.

From the standpoint of Prendergast's instrumental use of space, about which a few things have already been mentioned, one of the first impressions in "Revere Beach" is that of a compact grouping of units set in a shallow space and extending more or less evenly over the entire foreground in the manner of a panorama or a frieze. Nonetheless, the entire area of the canvas, including the frieze-like foreground, reveals a surprising variety of space effects and of space organizations. The mural type of closed-off recession, for example, affecting the foregound grouping, plays against the open spaciousness of the water area in the upper portion of the painting, which is relatively sparsely and leisurely punctuated by boats and cliffs, as it also plays against the sense of infinity at the horizon. And, within the composite foreground grouping, replete with a continuous activity of units in and units of space, there are, besides the already noted pyramids and "basket," subsidiary space organizations occurring one after the other—the central standing figure, for instance, becoming the

post-hub for the three-dimensional grouping around it; the figure standing half way between the middle of the canvas and the left edge becoming the center of another subsidiary organization in three-dimensional space; and the tall figure behind the mule at right of center and the figure bending over near the right end of the canvas becoming the center of their respective immediate surroundings of space and of units in space.

In keeping with the two artists' respective interests in the illustrative aspect, space as three-dimensional space in the Prendergast is not emphatic, not obvious, whereas in the Glackens it informs, as we saw, very readily of the locale all along the way. This is not to say that Prendergast's space fails to give the scene's locale, but that the locale itself plays less a rôle in the picture meaning of the space than does the fact that space, both two- and three-dimensional, is that against and with which the quiet staccato dance of the color blobs takes place: space is where the color blobs tap-tap; it is the color blobs' dancing partner.

For all that the color units in the Prendergast function quite directly as patches and blobs, they still suggest a certain amount of three-dimensionality. Expressively, they partake of something of the rugged solidity of Cézanne's volumes merged with a Manet-esque silhouetting of flattened volumes and are modelled with only just enough roundedness so as not to destroy their patchiness. This roundedness in depth helps the illustrative telling of things to a cerain extent, but its more direct and significant effect lies in its qualifying the character of the staccato: by easing the edges and angles of the patches, it tempers their abruptness.

As in the works of Daumier and Cézanne, among other artists, line in the Prendergast occurs as a dark band. Fulfilling Prendergast's intent in this painting, the dark tone of the boundary line sets off the blob character of the generally light tone of the color units. It is not a continuous line, but is "lost and found," appearing as small pieces of line rather than as sweeps. Thus, just as there is blob-blob of color, spot-spot of light, pat-pat of space, so there is bit-bit of line. And the staccato rhythm of the picture move-

ment, varied though it is by the assortment of guises in which it is carried out—as color, as light, as space, as line—is nonetheless sustained by the consistency in this instrumental use of the means.

The linear factor is all-pervasive. It is found not only in the outlines throughout, but also in the linear character of the brush work. Some of the strokes are semi-rigid in the sense that each of them moves through its slowly curving length and then stops, while others appear as semi-angular coils. In this fashion, the strokes carry out, in their way, the double expressive rôle of the other means—the smoothness of their relationships combining with their drama to make for that gentle staccato which is Prendergast's own—and the brush strokes do so at the same time that they serve also the purposes of drawing out the essence of what's what and what's doing.

Notwithstanding the fact that the illustrative in the Prendergast, as we have brought out, is subservient to the decorative expressiveness, the illustrative is far from being neglected. Drawing, although marked by simplifications and other distortions, tells of the subject facts with a terse and convincing expressiveness. This is true both in the individual figures and in their groupings, drawn, as they are, with Prendergast's unique feeling of quaintness, of awkward grace and of naïveté.

In this terse drawing, we recognize Prendergast's creative, instrumental, use of Manet's simplifications and flattening (*e.g.*, Plate 12), Daumier's plastic line (*e.g.*, Plate 13), Cézanne's constructive planes (*e.g.*, Plate 79)—all adapted to meet the requirements of Prendergast's decoratively expressive theme. The brush work is perceptible, as it is also in the Impressionists and in Glackens' "Belport," but here it asserts itself in its distinctive pattern and substance of pigment. Prendergast's decorative effects, including transferred qualities from embroidery, tapestry (*e.g.*, Plate 108) and a pebbly beach, are due, in great part, to this creative, this instrumental, use of the Impressionists' perceptible pattern of brush work, as is also the expressive effect of the gentle staccato that characterizes the pervasive activity.

With all the continuously patterning brush work, there

is in "Revere Beach" a varied interplay of sizes in the individual strokes, ranging from the broad, flat, squarish Manet-like touches to the dots of the Pointillists and, at times, a control and a piling up of overlapping strokes of paint that reveal an affinity to Cézanne's technique.

In the Glackens, technique primarily helps to describe the illustrative shapes of things, or, more accurately stated, it patterns in such a way as to help to describe those shapes. In the Prendergast, on the contrary, while technique also describes illustratively, it is, over and above that, very much geared to saying one more blob, spot, dab or dot—geared, that is, to the decorative expression of quiet aliveness and of the gentle drama conveyed also by the use of the other means. The strokes themselves, as we noted, vary in size and shape, thus working for drama, but there is an effect of regularity to their irregularity that establishes a oneness throughout the surface. Furthermore, the brush work contributes to the modelling of picture units and to a quiver of the atmosphere, and, together with the color and the light, it helps to portray the spirit of place of the scene as a whole—a spirit of place different, clearly, from that in the Glackens, yet that does not lack a sense of locale, a depiction of subject facts and activities that are similar in a general way to those used by Glackens, but, in the Prendergast, used for and, consequently, producing a different picture statement.

With the blob-blob of color, the spot-spot of light, the tap-tap of space, the bit-bit of line and the dab-dab and dot-dot of brush strokes, there is, needless to say, an instrumental use of each one of the plastic means as it is made to create a rhythmic effect in terms of its own potentialities. But each one of the means does so in a similar tempo. And not only are the blob-blob and the bit-bit, etc., compatible in this respect, but also in the fact that, by their concerted activities, they help to establish the distinctive identity of the total painting.

It remains to be mentioned that there are in the Prendergast, as was also the case in the Glackens—again, merely as a supercriticism—areas which betray a falling down in the instrumental use of the means. First, for what Pren-

dergast strives for and achieves and, as a consequence, for what the picture calls for, the squarish white unit, possibly intended to say boat sail, at the upper right corner, speaks too loudly in its untempered, unmuted whiteness and is, thus, not in tune with the muted character of the colors in the rest of the painting. Erring in the opposite direction, the dark parasol at the upper center is too dull in tone to be in complete harmony with the subtle inner luminosity of its peers. Neither one of these two units, the white "sail" or the purple parasol, is wrong in itself, yet it is wrong here, in the sense of being matter out of place, like, perhaps, an accomplished actor miscast—as Paul Robeson playing Ariel in *The Tempest.* These "slips," however, in the strict continuity of the compositional rhythm, detract not from the fact that Prendergast, here, no less than Glackens in "Belport," gives us the subject facts and makes of them a picture, a work of art. To paraphrase Joyce Cary's words, "Art gives both the facts and the feelings."

In Conclusion

In summing up the comparative analysis of Glackens' "Belport" and Prendergast's "Revere Beach," we can start by recalling that both artists began their paintings with several factors in common. These include, among others, the general type of subject; the principle of purposive distortion; the sources in the traditions of painting. Once, however, these came to be adapted by each artist to serve his own picture purpose, their commonality vanished. They acquired not only diversity, but a distinctive nature and significance as they were made to function instrumentally in each artist's design. Stated another way, any artist—whether he presents the subject facts broadly, as does Prendergast, or specifically, as does Glackens—individualizes his subject facts and gives them a new identity, that of subject matter, as his personal aesthetic experience of those facts transforms them into constituents of a new situation, *i.e.,* the situation embodied in and expressed by his painting.

By the above, we do not mean to say that one aspect of the water scene was perceived by one of the two artists we

discussed and not by the other or that what one failed to portray the other did. The fact is that certain features of the scene stressed by Prendergast are incompatible with some of those stressed by Glackens, and vice versa. Nor should it be taken to imply that a combining of what each artist put down would result in a more complete or aesthetically more desirable depiction of a water scene. Both Prendergast and Glackens saw virtually the same physical things, and both knew the same traditions. But each perceived and expressed the scene in the light of his own interests, feelings, background and imagination; and each, through his instrumental handling of his material, made of Impressionism, of blue, of Manet, etc., as of the subject itself, the instrument he needed for *his* discovery and *his* expression of the meaning it had for *him*.

What each artist expresses in his picture is the result of an interaction of subject and self, *i.e.*, an interaction of all that his senses registered and his interests, sensitivity, knowledge of the traditions, etc.—in short, all that he brings to his total experience of the subject facts.

Each artist, in other words, to quote the current expression, "does his thing." That, in itself, however, says nothing on behalf of the aesthetic merit of each one's picture: a murderer "does his thing," too, and a picture, likewise, can murder art even as it is made to "do the painter's thing"—as, for instance, merely to stress the appeal of the subject or to provoke publicity or conversation or merely to mystify or to stun the layman or to vent private emotions or to carry off the prizes or merely to supply what the public wants.

"Doing one's thing" has, nevertheless, become a catchphrase among many people for expressing approbation, particularly in the arts, and is frequently offered as a "proof" of aesthetic virtue. In point of fact, the phrase represents nothing more than a "cop-out," to quote another current expression, for it fails to touch in any way upon what art as art requires.*

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*See: V. de Mazia, "Expression," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Autumn, 1974, The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion Station, Pa., pp. 3–4.

In the case of Glackens and Prendergast, as in the case of any other artist, the vitally determining factor in the validity of their work from the standpoint of art is their sensitivity to the *aesthetic* aspects of the world, together with their sense of integrity and their respective individuality as embodied in what each one perceives, experiences and expresses. The Glackens water scene reflects the personality of a man keenly alive to the joyful, colorfully picturesque activities of people and of things around him. That of Prendergast discloses a naïve, unsophisticated pleasure in the color mosaic of some of life's simple episodes, in the quiet drama, the joy of living in a peaceful mood and at an unhurried pace or tempo—a response to the *effects* of what is happening, rather than, as with Glackens, to the happening as such. "Belport" is so very much Glackens. "Revere Beach" is so very much Prendergast.

If we were, as we have done on another occasion for another purpose,* to cast our observations about the difference between the Glackens and the Prendergast in a sort of algebraic formula that states, in the simplest of ways, the respective emphasis each gives to the instrumental use of his means, we could come up with the following relational models. Using the symbols E for the expressive aspect of the work, I for the illustrative and D for the decorative, for the Glackens we would have:

$$\frac{E\text{-}I}{D},$$

that is, expressive illustration primary, and the decorative aspect subservient to it; and for the Prendergast we would have:

$$\frac{D\text{-}E}{I},$$

that is, the illustrative aspect in the subsidiary rôle.

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*Violette de Mazia, "Three Aspects of Art," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Autumn, 1975, The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion Station, Pa., pp. 31, 31ftn.

From the point of view of the topic of this article—namely, subject and subject matter considered in the light of instrumentalism—it cannot accurately be said that Glackens and Prendergast, in "Belport" and "Revere Beach," respectively, "painted a water scene," for that is not what they did. Rather, they each painted a picture, the identity of which embodies the specific feelings, the meanings that each one derived from his experience of a water scene. Each artist selected and used a water scene as his subject and made of it—as each made also of the blue tonality, the Impressionists' technique, the distorted perspective, the elongated figures, etc.—a means, a tool, an instrument well fitted to carry out his individual picture intent, to create his particular subject matter and unique aesthetic statement. What can be said, then, is that the subject—water scene—as it is made to be what it is in Glackens' picture and as it is made to be what it is in Prendergast's, is not any more the same than is the pencil the same when made to be a toy by La Mikada and a perch by the cockateel.

All of this is to say that subject matter results from the instrumental use of the subject, *i.e.,* the use of the subject to satisfy a picture intent. For it is in the very course of instrumental usage that the artist's subject, re-shaped by the requirements of his intent, acquires the new, distinctive features of the subject matter which merge into the identity of the painting.

Crucial to the concept of instrumentalism in art is that, although the fittingness to the end in view of the means employed and of the manner in which they are employed provides a measure of aesthetic satisfaction, it does not assure creative achievement. Creativeness is not to be found in the end result alone, but must, perforce, prevail also in each one of the means resorted to if creativeness is to be attained in the completed statement. In short, lest the end be uncreative, the means to it must be created.*

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*A fundamental lesson to be learned by aspiring artists from our study of instrumentalism, is that their work will be neither personal nor creative so long as they paint in a certain manner solely because they have been fascinated by

It is, of course, on the appropriate selecting and adapting of the means employed, on, in effect, the creating of them—or, in a word, on instrumentalism—that creative achievement in art, as elsewhere, depends. Is it not, after all, because of what the means employed *do* and are *made to do* that the end result *is* what it *is*? So it is that handsome is as handsome does.

For our essay in the next issue of VISTAS, our intention is to explore the status of subject and subject matter in paintings conventionally, although not necessarily justifiably, categorized as "Abstract," "Non-objective," "*Art Brut*" ("Brute Art") and "Surrealist" and/or to move on to consider the meaning of Tradition and of Form and what each stands for.

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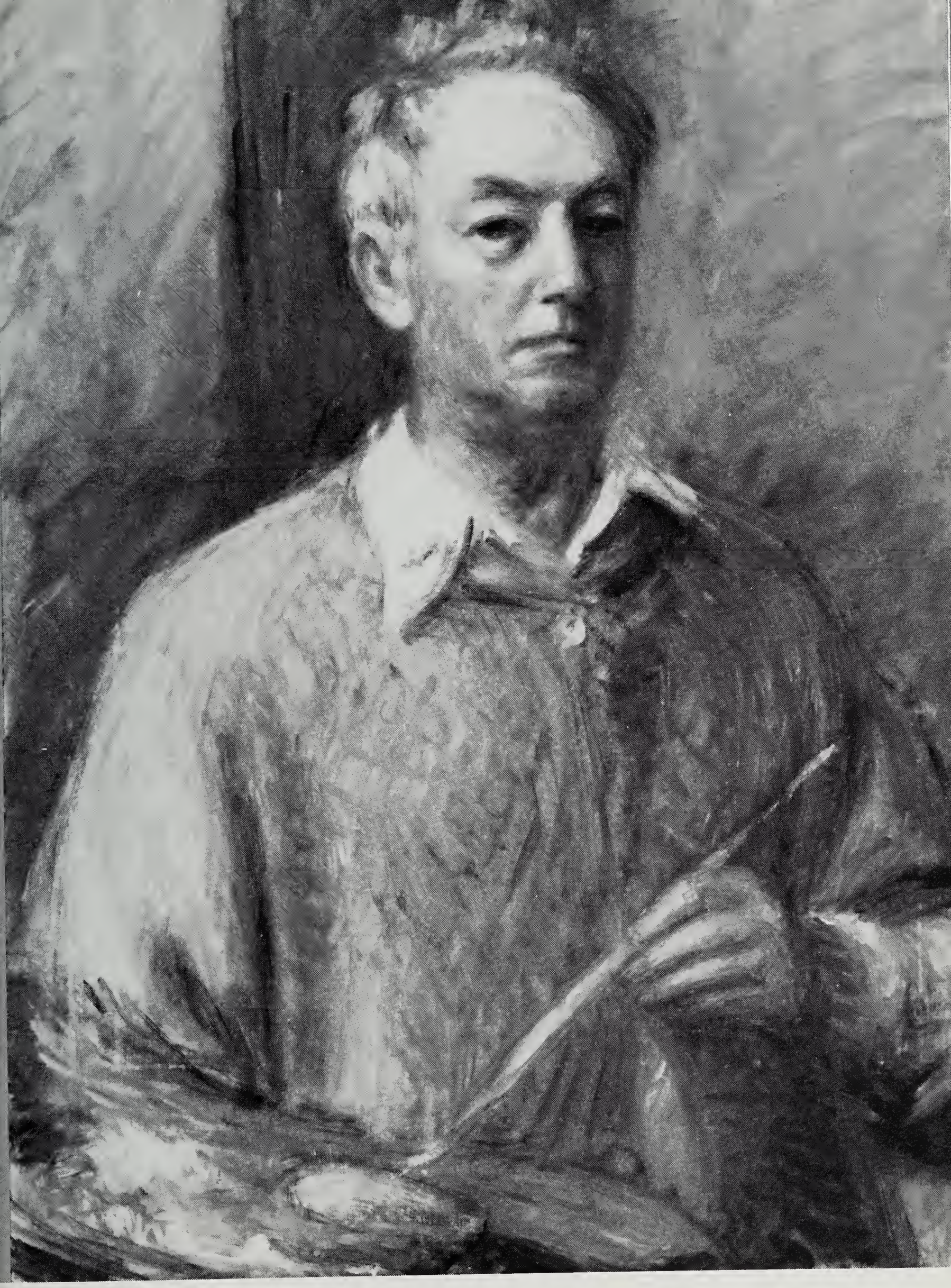
the successful use of this manner on the part of someone else—a teacher, a friend, an artist able to sell his works, a recognized master. For, as our comparison of the Glackens and the Prendergast demonstrates, if an artist has something of his own to express that is aesthetically significant, it cannot be expressed in just any technique, with just any kind of color or light or linear or spatial effect. Nor can it be expressed according to a dictum or a rule, no matter what the art book or the teacher says. It should be evident that every part and aspect of what the artist seeks to re-create must be of his own selection and his own adaptation in order to serve and to fulfill his particular purpose. It is the artist's own interest, his own intent, and nobody else's, that must determine, govern, control and, finally, justify his selection, use and organization of the means he employs for his painting's statement.

For the spectator, there is an equally important lesson. If he is to understand, to judge and to enjoy a work of art not either as a memento or as a plain manifestation of emotion, but as a work of art, he should remember that there is no aspect of the artist's piece, no use of color, light, line, space or technique, that is to be praised or condemned unless the judgement be based on the artist's instrumental use of his means towards achieving what he is trying to express and, naturally, on whether or not his intent is worthwhile or valid from the point of art's concern.

Pertinent Portraits

William J. Glackens
(1870–1938)
(Photograph Courtesy Ira Glackens)

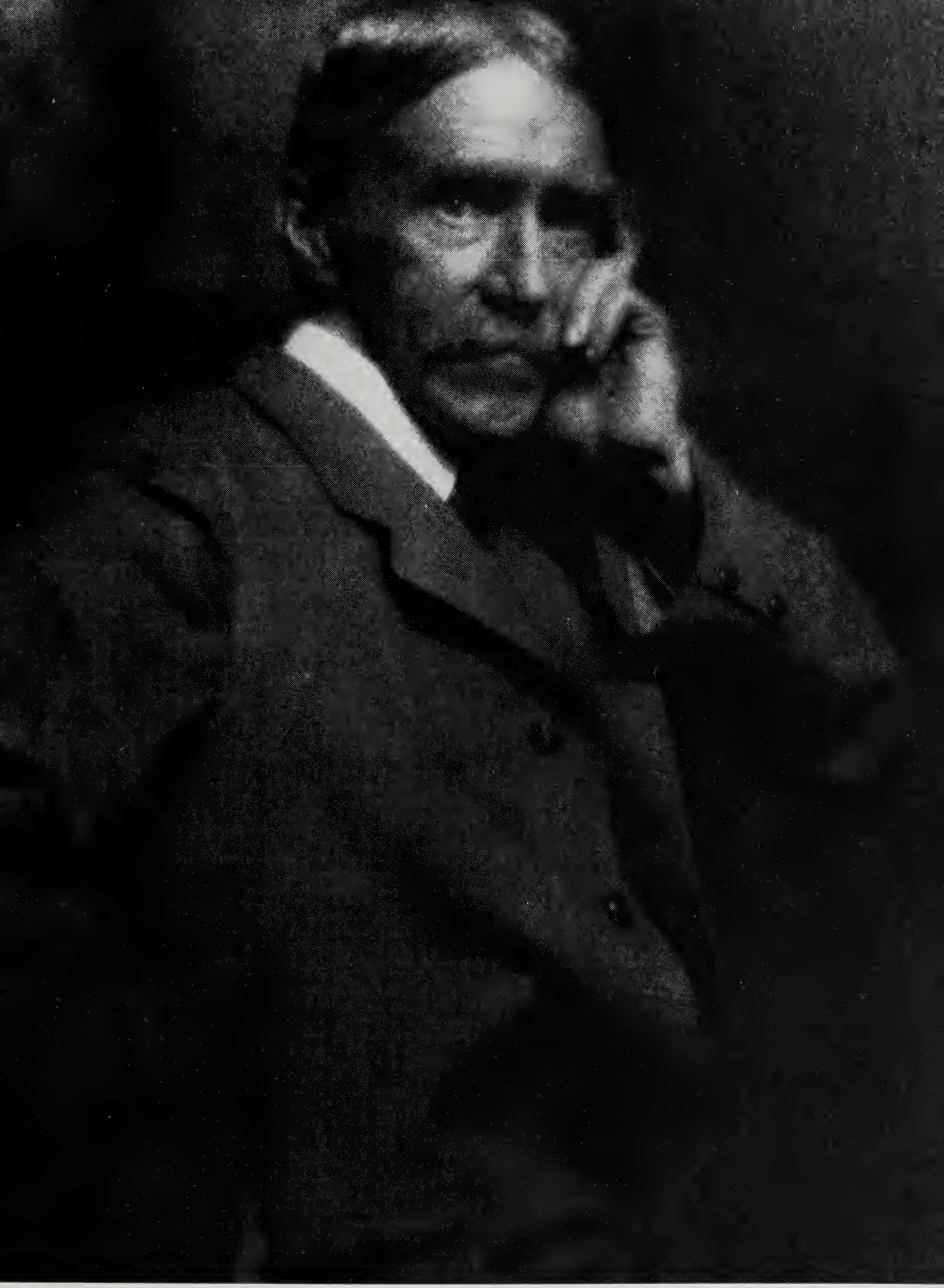
Self-Portrait
by William J. Glackens



Self-Portrait
by William J. Glackens
(National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.—Gift of Ira Glackens)

William J. Glackens (in 1935)
(Photograph Courtesy Ira Glackens)

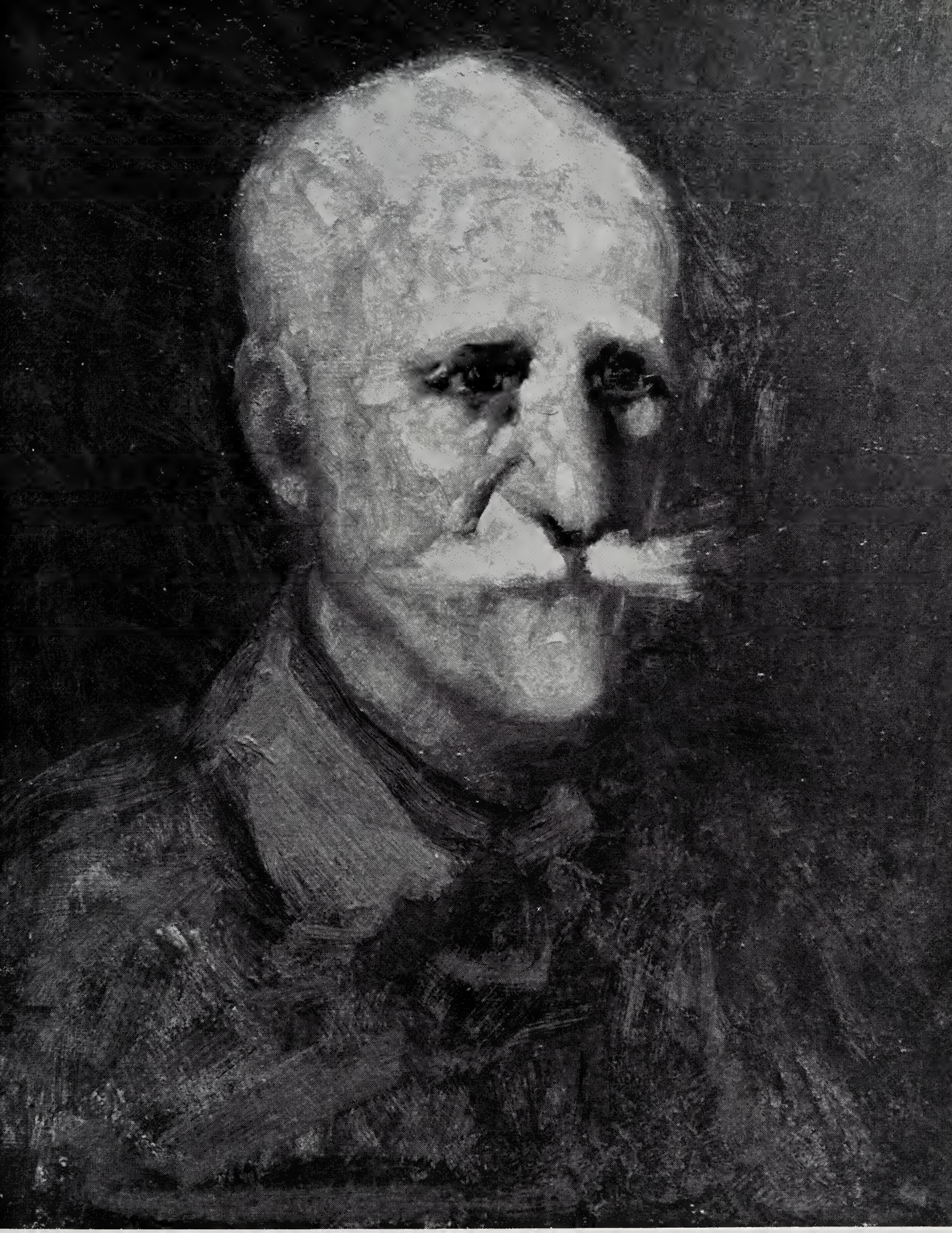
William J. Glackens
(Photograph Courtesy Ira Glackens)



Maurice B. Prendergast
(1859–1924)
(Photograph Courtesy of Macbeth Gallery Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Maurice B. Prendergast (c. 1904)
Sketch by George Luks
Pencil on paper 10 × 6¾ inches
(Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art—
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Root—Reg. #42.38)

Maurice B. Prendergast
Sketch by William J. Glackens
(Courtesy Ira Glackens)



Portrait of My Friend Maurice B. Prendergast the Painter
by George Luks
(Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution)

Charles Prendergast (in the late 1930s)
(1863–1948)
(Photograph Courtesy Mrs. Charles Prendergast)

Charles Prendergast (in early 1920s)
by Virginia Keep Clark
(Courtesy Mrs. Charles Prendergast)
(Present ownership unknown)

Maurice B. Prendergast, Charles Prendergast, William J. Glackens
Mrs. L. E. Travis, Edith Dimock (Glackens)—in 1917, at the
Illustrators' Ball, Hotel Brevoort, New York
(Photograph Courtesy Ira Glackens)

Albert C. Barnes—William J. Glackens

Informed Perception
A Personal View*

by MARILYN BAUMAN**

WHEN I was a child, I often went, long before I knew it was good for me, to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Many winter afternoons, after ice skating in Central Park, a friend and I would walk down to the Fifty-third Street entrance to get warm and to look at the pictures. At thirteen we found Surrealism entertaining, and we would make a game out of matching titles to pictures. Especially intriguing was "Mama, Papa is Wounded" (Plate 34), by Yves Tanguy, which would reduce us to helpless laughter as we attempted to pick out Mama and Papa in the weird landscape of prickly objects. "Could that be Papa in need of a shave?" I'd whisper as I pointed at one or another area of the canvas, and our stifled giggles would draw the attention of a guard, who frowned at us or asked us to leave, depending on the success of the stifling.

Much later, with college behind me, I learned that there were good reasons to go to the Museum, and getting warm was not one of them. I had studied art history and so-called appreciation and had found out all about pictures and painters. So, when, at twenty-three, I tackled the Louvre, I felt prepared.

It was the "Mona Lisa" I went to see. I had been told it is a masterpiece, perhaps the greatest painting ever painted. I had read Walter Pater's gushing accolade—"this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies had passed." I had learned that the sitter, Lisa, was the third wife of a Florentine merchant named Francesco di Bar-

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*Some of the material of this essay was originally presented by the author to The Seminar of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

**Alumna of the course in the philosophy and appreciation of art and member of the Seminar of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

tolommeo del Giocondo, that she was twenty-four, and that, as a portrait, the work was, in Vasari's words, "an exact copy of nature." I also knew that, from the point of view of technique, Leonardo had laid down on the panel around a hundred thin glazes.

Equipped with all this information, I was, even so, unprepared to confront the "Mona Lisa," because, despite my schooling, I did not have a method that enabled me to appreciate it. My only accomplishment was to add it to my list of tourist trophies. I certainly did not feel enriched by my encounter with it; I simply felt that something was missing in me: when aesthetic sensitivity was handed out, I figured, I must have been ice skating.

This sense of aesthetic inadequacy stayed with me until I was lucky enough to find a painting teacher in Wilmington, Delaware, Edward Loper, Sr., who taught me to see and, therefore, to paint better, and a school, The Barnes Foundation, in Merion, Pa., that helped me to uncover with that seeing the art that is in painting.

All of this is what brings me to my subject in this essay: "Informed Perception: A Personal View."

I have become convinced by my experiences as a painter and teacher of painting that there is a correlation between what painters see and the forms they create that define their seeing. What I would like to share with the reader is my understanding of the process of perception and how that process can allow a painter to create a form uniquely his.

I come to this subject as one who has tried to travel that distance myself. I began drawing and painting when I was quite young. When I was ten, my mother sent me to a neighbor's apartment, where I was instructed, on her dining-room table, in the use of oil paint. The lessons were simple; I chose a picture, a postcard scene, a magazine illustration, or a calendar reproduction or photograph and copied it. Success was measured by how close to the original my efforts came. Later, I went to an impressive loft in the West Seventies, where I was taught by a "professional" artist. The lessons here were depressingly familiar. Again, I was told to copy pictures, and, again, success was meas-

ured by my ability to delineate every dew drop, every fluffy cloud, or every icicle before me.

Is it any wonder that, when I arrived in Wilmington as a wife and mother and sought to continue my "hobby," I believed that summer trees were green? I had twenty-twenty vision, I was not color blind, I had looked at trees, and I saw green. My new teacher was Mr. Edward Loper, Sr., and he told me there was color other than green in those trees, and he said I could not see it because I did not know how. I silently told him he was crazy.

But he was persistent. He kept pointing, and I kept looking. He showed me paintings by Cézanne, Renoir, and Monet. Finally, one day the trees came alive in color as I looked, and my world, the very world I thought I had been seeing, was transformed.

"What you see is what you get," says the man with the quick hands and the little cups in the circus sideshow. The same is true of all visual experiences. Recently, while painting in Québec City, I had the pleasure of presenting this idea to an eleven-year old Ottawa boy who stopped to watch me work. Unlike the many adult observers, he was genuinely interested, if puzzled. He said nothing for quite some time, then cleared his throat and began: "I can understand that you draw those buildings on your canvas. I can see how you did that. But do you then make up the colors like I used to do in my coloring books?"

I liked the sincerity of the question, and it was a lot more provocative than the usual run of "Why didn't you put in the stop sign?" or "Why did you make that window open, when it's closed?" So I stopped working to explain to him that I was not making anything up, that the colors I was putting on the canvas were the colors that I saw.

He was incredulous. "Come on," he said. "No one sees colors like those." He was one critic who did not mince words.

"Okay," I told him. "Watch me for a while, and keep looking at those buildings, and see if you don't see even a little of what I'm seeing." I went back to work. And he watched.

After about fifteen minutes of absolute silence and in-

tense concentration—I mean, this kid was really looking, first at my brush strokes, then at the spot on the building, then at my palette as I mixed the next color—he finally exclaimed, "Hey, look at that! There really is some blue right there—right there next to that window. I can see that blue you just put down. Whaddaya know! I can really see that color, and I didn't see it before you showed it to me."

I felt like hugging him, but he was gone in the instant that he finished the sentence. I wondered if he would remember our encounter some day as he sat in some art history class and was given the "facts" about the "Mona Lisa." Before I could wonder any longer, however, he was back with five or six friends, to whom he proceeded to lecture, using my painting for demonstration purposes. "Now see," he said, "how she looks for the colors in that building. I know you all think that it is a cement-colored building, but look right there, under the window. There is blue there, and even purple. Do you see that?" Much wonderment in the ranks, and then they moved on, no doubt to become art collectors in another fifteen or twenty years.

That episode in Québec City came long after a different, but equally enlightening, experience I had in my studio while teaching children to paint. It was an evening when the group grew restless early, so I had them clean up before time, and we spent the remainder of the session looking at pictures in books. When we came to Picasso's "Portrait of Hélène Parmelin" (Plate 49), the reaction was immediate and negative. "Yuk," "ugly," "weird" were among the words used to describe it. One particularly outspoken ten-year-old protested that it was "the most disgusting thing" she had ever seen. "Look at that spaghetti hair, those pig toes, those cigar fingers," she said irately. After complimenting her on her metaphors, I gently tried to interest the children in the balance of shapes and wedges of thick, powerful darks set against the twisted curves of the linear pattern. But they still went home muttering their "yuks" as they left.

Months later, I silently watched the same metaphoric ten-year-old create the watercolor reproduced on Plate 48 of Raggedy Ann and Andy. When she was finished, I com-

mented that her patterning of the hair was similar to the patterning of the hair in the Picasso portrait she had lampooned. "What Picasso portrait?" she said, obviously angered. "I never saw any Picasso portrait." "Oh yes you did," I argued and brought out the one that had caused such a stir. "No way," she insisted. "No way. I hate that picture. I never would do anything like that. Mine is not like *that*. Mine is just the way it looks, just the way I see it."

She had me there. Hers *is* just the way she saw it. But the idea that was now taking form in my mind was that she could see it that way only because Picasso had shown her it was possible. Without Picasso, who knows? Perhaps just a smear of red, perhaps a few overlapping lines. Yes, it was her picture; it was not Picasso's warmed over. But it was her picture *informed* by what she had seen in Picasso's.

Needless to say, my "eureka" was short-lived, for I immediately found my clever insight already concisely stated in the essay "Method," by Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia, in *Art and Education:*

> The traditions of art constitute the working capital of every artist; they are records of what painters have in the past discovered and revealed as significant; and the ultimate test of any painter's importance is his ability to add contributions of his own, by means of which his successors may carry further the work of discovery. The intelligence of the painter manifests itself in his use of the traditions to illuminate for him the world which he seeks to depict. . . .
>
> Every tradition may be regarded as a way of seeing and a manner of organizing; by extracting from the whole body of traditions the elements which serve best the purpose of his individual vision, the painter displays his intelligence in creating his individual form.*

Individual form, then, is laboriously born from the marriage of adapted tradition and personal perception. To see how this works, I shall first examine the perceptive process as I have experienced it in both the work of my students and my own work.

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*John Dewey, Albert C. Barnes, Laurence Buermeyer, Mary Mullen, Violette de Mazia, 3rd ed., The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion, Pa., 1954, p. 18.

In the course of my experience of this process, a much cherished, if naive, belief of mine was demolished. I thought that children drew the way they did because of difficulty with coordination. I figured that they were unskillful because their small muscle development was immature, that they could not control their hands well enough to execute what their eyes were seeing. Although small muscle development does play a part in manual dexterity, the truth is that children draw like children because they see like children; their seeing is immature, uneducated, at times woefully confused.

What I have observed is that looking at objects is not synonymous with seeing them. A grouping of onions on a plate can defeat a child because he does not see where they touch each other. He will try to draw each onion individually, even if that means that one is suspended in air, and will say with conviction that that is how they look. When I then touch the onions with my fingers and move over the contours and point out the negative spaces, the child's eyes open wide, and he quickly rubs out his drawing and begins again, this time grouping them according to his new vision. Why? What happens here that causes the first misperception?

Included in the book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain,* by Betty Edwards, is a chapter entitled "Your History as an Artist," in which the author analyzes this phenomenon. Her thesis is stated convincingly:

> A part of the answer is that, from childhood onward, we have learned to see things in terms of words: we name things, and we know facts about them. The dominant left verbal hemisphere doesn't want too much information about things it perceives—just enough to recognize and categorize. . . . But drawing requires that you look at something for a long time, perceiving lots of details, registering as much information as possible—ideally, everything. . . . The left hemisphere has no patience with this detailed perception, and says, in effect, "It's a chair, I tell you. That's enough to know. In fact, don't bother to look at it, because I've got a ready-made symbol for you. Here it is; add a few

details if you want, but don't bother me with this looking business."*

So, the entire perceptual difficulty for most beginning painters is that, whether children or adults, they "do not really see what is in front of their eyes."† I watch my students glance at a still life of a bottle, a glass, and an apple and hastily draw some kind of bottle, some kind of glass, and that famous apple seen in all coloring books, the cute round object with the slight indentation for the perfect little stem. "I'm finished," the child announces, not even realizing he has not really begun.

Furthermore, this is not merely a beginner's difficulty. Just this past summer, I courageously tackled grass and trees. I say courageously, because country landscapes have always defeated my best efforts. Comfortable with city streets, crowdedly massed buildings, and any setting of large, intricately complicated objects, I go aesthetically dumb when faced with rolling hills and fields. But this time, I returned to a waterfall that had terrified me five years earlier and, oddly enough, found it engaging and workable. Yet, when it came to the grassy banks, I saw only green. It took determination and persistence and much talking to myself to break the hold of that label, and I found I could see the colors in that grass only if I kept repeating to myself, over and over again, "There are colors there; it is not green grass; there are colors there." And, of course, there were, once I allowed myself to see them.

Betty Edwards concludes, in her book, that this inability to perceive objects clearly enough to draw out their visual meaning is, in extreme cases, a dyslexic-like disability and should, perhaps, be labeled "dyspictoria" or "dysartistica."‡ But, since drawing and painting are skills not vital for survival, they are not considered important enough to worry about.

Not important enough? How many mothers have whis-

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*J. P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, 1979, pp. 76–77.

†*Ibid.*, p. 78.

‡*Ibid.*, p. 62.

pered to me as they left their child in my studio, "I always wished I could draw." How much wonder and excitement I see on their faces as they observe their eight-year old competently drawing a complicated still life. How delightful an experience it is for me when I implant a tiny new perception in the mind of a child, as happened with a seven-year old at a school-bus stop whom I chanced upon proudly displaying her safety poster, a colorful picture of two children crossing the street at the light. I asked her if the sky made a line across the top like the one she had painted. "Of course," she answered. "The sky is up over my head, and the ground is down under my feet." "Look at it," I urged her. When she did, she became quiet and moved her eyes from the sky to her picture and back again. Then she smiled and said, "The blue goes behind, all the way down to where the trees and buildings are." "Yes," I said and, since she was so interested now, I pushed even further. "Is it blue?" I asked. She again looked hard, then shook her head and said, "Yes, it is mostly blue. But it gets lighter and even a little pink as it comes down."

I hasten to remark that I was not finding fault with the little girl's way of doing, nor is there any fault *per se* to find with it. My point in interceding was, rather, to offer her the possibility of *choosing* how she presented her idea, so that she not be just stuck on a stereotype, but have the chance to express something of her own. And part of what would give her that chance is to be able to look at things directly to see what happens that is of interest to her. That is what I call looking to see, and such observation that leads to the making of discoveries, *i.e.,* informed perception, as opposed to mere looking to confirm a pre-existing notion, is the prerequisite for perceptive growth.

In a related fashion, learning to see the colorfulness of everyday objects can enrich all visual experience, as, too, can learning to play an instrument enrich one's experience of music. My students, blocked, as I had been, by the knowledge that apples are red, lemons are yellow, and leaves are green, often resist this process with great determination. Children are sometimes freer in this regard and try "making up" colors. But, when I admire such at-

tempts by assuming they *found* those colors (whether the discovery comes from a need for those colors for the fulfillment of their idea or from so studying the object that the variety of shades appears, it does not matter), the young painters invariably tell me that they did not really see them, but are trying to make me happy. This is not much different from the occasion of a fellow painting student once telling me in a class that "if the lemon is yellow, paint it with every color but yellow, that's the trick" or of a cousin of mine being instructed by a teacher in a prestigious New York art school to paint a nude first only in blues, then only in reds, and so on.

Shortcuts will not train a student to see. What will work is a long, difficult struggle with the left hemisphere of the brain, until one is able to diminish the need always to apply such labels as "green" vase, "blue" sky, "pink" flower. The eye must be able, for example, to seek out the color in objects unfettered by previously learned symbols, so that the person can find what he needs for what he wants to say in his painting. And, to this end, I try, in my teaching, to lead my students to use their eyes as if they were seeing for the first time, to discover, for example, how a red tulip petal can be orange, purple, and blue when their eyes are left alone to explore it.

The result of this training produces a warmth of excitement that accompanies the growth of any hitherto undeveloped skill. My students can barely contain their enthusiasm as they begin to see color, and I record their remarks faithfully. "I see so much more now," says one; "I used to drive past this old brown cornfield every day to work, a boring stretch of road, and now I observe the colors weaving through the field as the light changes." Another describes how she finds all sorts of colors in her black asphalt driveway: "It isn't black at all," she rushes to tell me, "but saturated with lavender grays, yellows, oranges, all sorts of colors!" And the mother of a seven-year-old student tells me that her son exclaimed as she dished out some peas, "Why, look at those blues and browns." "Where?" she queried, thinking the peas must be rotten. "Look at

them," he urged her. "Can't you see all those colors?" "No," she admitted a little sadly, if with some relief.

According to Samuel Scudder, a student of Louis Agassiz, a Harvard professor of natural history, the habit of direct observation is nurtured in the sciences, and its lack is considered a serious failing. In his essay "Take This Fish and Look at It,"* Scudder describes his first lessons in ichthyology under Agassiz. The lesson was uncomplicated. Professor Agassiz gave him a haemulon preserved in alcohol and said to him, "Take this fish. . . and look at it; we call it a haemulon; by and by I will ask what you have seen."

Scudder looked for ten minutes and "had seen all that could be seen in that fish." For the next few hours he waited for the professor to return, and, bored, he finally decided to draw the fish. "Now with surprise," he recounts, "I began to discover new features in the creature." When the professor returned, Scudder enthusiastically related his findings. However, Agassiz was obviously disappointed and told him he had not looked very carefully at all; in fact, he had missed one of the most conspicuous features of the animal.

For three long days, Agassiz put that fish before Scudder, forbidding him to look at anything else or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look" was his repeated injunction. Scudder concluded that this was the best lesson he had ever had. Moreover, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement was accompanied by a warning. "Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

In other words, the method of direct observation to make discoveries is as valid for scientific investigation as it is for artistic expression; it is the goals that differ, not the process. And, if "facts are stupid things until brought into connection with some general law," then subject facts are

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*In *Readings for Writers*, 2nd ed., eds. Jo Ray McCuen and Anthony Winkler, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York, 1974, pp. 103–106.

equally stupid things until brought into connection with a design, the precursor of individual form.

Because of this, the skills of observing edges and contours, space, depth, proportion, color, volume will not by themselves, create a work of art. One of my adult students, trying, as clever people do, to reduce everything to a simple formula, said, "All I have to do is learn to reproduce exactly what I see, getting the relationships of light and dark, distance and closeness, masses, color, and line correct; then I'll have a great picture. Right?" Wrong. I am not sure what she meant by "great," but I think she meant realistic, recognizable. Yes, with all those skills mastered, the subject of her picture would be recognizable; she would be a skilled technician. But, unless all of this included what she was, how she, in a way uniquely hers, saw the world, and unless all of this was also a new way of seeing, a taking of the next tiny step from what other artists had already shown us to what she had now discovered, then reproduction was possible, but not creation.

For creation to occur, the painter must do more than see color and learn technique. Seeing must become selective and must be conditioned by the observer's background and interest at a given moment. To perceive is to discern meaning, and seeing is the tool that enhances the process.

I still vividly remember my first exposure to this idea. Quite a few years ago, on a painting trip to Rockport, Massachusetts, with Mr. Loper's class, I worked on a painting of fish nets and boats at dry dock. Close by was a fellow painter, many years more experienced than I, doing the same subject and, in my view, doing it much better. I was both jealous and discouraged, and, when the teacher came by, I said something like "I don't know why I spend so much time working so hard. I can't paint. I probably never will paint as well as he can." The teacher, not known for either tact or sympathy, exploded. "I never want to hear you say that again," he raged. "None of us is in competition with the other. He is what he is, and he is giving what he can give. You are what you are, and you are giving what you can give."

"Well, yes," I responded, meek now, because I could see

how angry he was, "But his is so creative, and mine is just an ordinary copy of what is out there." That did it. "Ordinary copy, huh!" he roared. "Why, you've left out all kinds of things. Look here, look there. Where is that in your picture? Where is that?" And he began pointing to objects, bits of pipe, rope, ladders that not only were not in my picture, but that I had not even seen until he pointed to them. Feeling further defeat because I took this as a sin of omission, I began to apologize. "I never even noticed that stuff," I lamely offered. "Of course not," he replied. "Your picture didn't need it, so you didn't see it. Your picture dictated what you found of interest, what shapes your eye settled on. *Your* picture. Look what you did to that box, to this one. They don't do that. But your picture needed them to do that. What your picture is saying *caused* you to see them that way."

Now, this was a new concept for me. As he spoke, I looked again at my subject, and I could see it shift slightly, away from what I would have sworn was "the way it was," to conform with the new pieces he had led me to see. Years later, I had much the same experience during a lecture by Miss de Mazia at The Barnes Foundation on Matisse's "Joy of Life" (Plate 114). Even though I had looked at this painting many times, when she pointed out the *repoussoir* effect of the tree at the left, I realized that not only had I never seen that effect, I also had not really seen the painting at all.

My lesson at the boatyard in Rockport was concluded with a command: "Stop complaining and just paint." As I shrugged and complied, my teacher, Mr. Loper, laughed and added one last comment. "I once went to visit Pippin," he said. "He took me out to a street he was painting in West Chester, Pennsylvania.* I should have known better, but, after watching him work for a while, I asked him why he made everything so flat, so patterned. He looked at me in amazement and said, 'Why, that's just the way it is. That's why I'm a great painter—because I don't make up a lot of

*The painting by Pippin this anecdote involves is reproduced on Plate 89.

stuff like those white painters do. I just paint things exactly as they are.' "

Obviously, what must happen if a painter is to develop an individual form is twofold: his perception of his world must be personal, must be an expression of the meaning of his visual experiences, with selection, arrangement, and depiction of mass, space, line, and color occurring in a way uniquely his; and this perceptive process needs to be guided and informed by his adaptation of those meanings in the traditions of art that he, because of his background, experience, and interest, has chosen as significant and has developed for his purpose.

In addition, an artist's perception is made deeper, fuller, and richer by any life experience that he transfers into his work. Whether from the point of view of everyday commerce with things, scenes, people, or places or from that of the traditions of painting, the artist observes his world and adapts what he finds there to say his say in his work. For example, when Renoir reached an impasse in his expression, he traveled to Brittany, Africa, Italy, and the Isles of Guernsey and Jersey, thereby nourishing his vision. The influences of his trips to Africa and Italy on his color and light were present in the work of 1880–1883 (*e.g.*, Plate 51); his reaction to Italy, to ancient Greek sculpture, and to early Italian frescoes can be seen in the work of 1885–1887 (*e.g.*, Plate 25). This "exotic interlude" speaks clearly of the ability of an artist to select and adapt for his purpose what he sees in both his world and the traditions of art. With Matisse, too, we can see how he transferred into his work what he found decoratively exciting in such objects as cretonnes, Oriental rugs, Persian tiles, mosaics, and tapestries (*e.g.*, Plates 96 and 115).

Those who have taken the Barnes Foundation course in the philosophy and appreciation of art have heard Miss de Mazia lecture on the differences in individual interest—the massiveness and architectural monumentality of a mountain for Cézanne (*e.g.*, Plate 100), the subtle space relationships among pots and pans for Chardin (*e.g.*, Plate 26), the voluptuous color of flesh for Renoir (*e.g.*, Plate 74). This is not to say that artists select only those subjects

that obviously reveal the visual meanings that interest them: Cézanne perceived architectural monumentality not only in Mont Ste-Victoire (Plate 100), but also in apples (*e.g.*, Plate 81). In other words, an individual interest can uncover meanings which remain hidden for the ordinary observer, and it is in this way that the artist's recorded experience becomes the source of our own learning to see.

As Dr. Barnes puts it:

> In painting, the forms which a painter creates reveal unerringly the organization of his mind and character. Just as the forms of things themselves are protean, many-sided, varying under different circumstances and at different periods of time, so also are varied the forms which an artist may create. The painter's individuality finds expression in what he sees to be distinctive and characteristic in the real world, and, since it is form that confers individuality, this amounts to the perception of a specific form. . . . It is thus that "the style is the man."*

If, indeed, "the style is the man," how does a painter imaginatively perceive a subject in order to express the meaning of a visual experience and give it form? The painting reproduced on Plate 113 will help to answer this question. What did this painter see when he looked at his subject, and what enabled him to see it the way he did?

Since the painting first spoke to me in terms of color, the light, airy, pastel-like color harmonies of oranges, pinks, yellows interwoven with slate blues and grays offered the first clues. The color is applied lightly and layered. It occurs in areas that are broken up into boxy, geometric shapes that sometimes define objects and sometimes echo them, as in the units that say small houses and the units that say sky and water. The tones and hues selected are used to create such delicate color harmonies as might be found in, say, conch shells, dusty cement, slate, and concrete, the meanings of which are thus transferred into the seascape setting.

The space recedes in the central unit because of the linear perspective of the rooftops and the dock planks at

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**The Art in Painting*, 3rd ed., Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1937, p. 28.

the lower right. However, the unit to the left that says grassy bank, acting as a *repoussoir,* pushes back the rest of the composition. This unit, moreover, is on a vertical plane, as are the geometric units that make up the areas that say water and sky. These interlocking planes provide the device by which the composition of the cove with small cabins and boats is achieved. Further, there is an overall suffusion of light and an absence of minute detail: many elements, such as windows, doors, ripples in water, rocks, and stones, are suggested, rather than fully defined.

Obviously, the design of this painting is decorative. It aims at immediate sensuous appeal. To realize that interest, all the plastic means have been simplified. Space recession is shallow; volumes are slight; line emphatically patterns; and color is neither structural nor chorded, but related in terms of either contrast or harmony.

This painter's perception did not occur in a void. A painter is not a Lockian *tabula rasa,* but a specialist who brings to each subject accumulated visual experiences and relevant knowledge of the traditions of art. For example, in the unit that says sky, the visual experience of shafts of light breaking through clouds was processed through a mind informed by Cubist paintings, like Braque's "Harbor in Normandy" (Plate 128). The geometric pattern and interlocking of planes found in Cubism have been transformed via imaginative perception, and it is from this union that the new form emerged.

The color and shape of the subject were similarly processed through a mind informed, this time, by Pascin's use of geometrically shaped color areas, as, for example, in "Hermine" (Plate 23), creating now an angular pattern more obviously pronounced than those found in Pascin. There is here, also, the quality of pastel that Pascin imparts to the color, but it is a pastel of a stronger, denser type. Thus, a comparison with Pascin's "Hermine" shows that Pascin's gentleness and delicacy have become, in the painting on Plate 113, more rigid, arid, and dramatic.

Another source for this painting is to be found in the work of Matisse in general. With a similar interest in the decorative aspect of the objective world, this painting leans

heavily on Matisse's elimination of detail, his use of brush strokes for the sake more of ornamental elaboration than of realistic drawing and modeling, and his incorporation of bright, vivid colors. However, unlike that of Matisse, the organization here occurs primarily by way of the geometric shapes of color areas, which fit together like pieces of a puzzle, though without the resulting flattening of volumes that is found in the Cubist paintings of Picasso (*e.g.*, Plate 50), or Braque (*e.g.*, Plate 98).

My brief comments about this painting were intended to indicate how the painter chose and adapted relevant material to enhance his perception and to create his form. His material existed both in his world and in the traditions, and it is his imaginative synthesis of the two aspects of the expressive process that led to his individual form. Creation suffers if either aspect is deficient. Whether the created object is fully successful in its unification of all the plastic means, whether the form is highly unique and individual or leans too heavily on its sources, whether, in short, this painting is a convincing work of art because the artist has taken a step of visual discovery and has been technically proficient enough to communicate that to us skillfully are other matters for analysis.

But, as you might expect, when I told the painter of this painting what I intended to say about it in this essay, he exclaimed, "My God, I never thought all those things! I just painted what I saw." It was the ten-year-old and Pippin all over again. This reply notwithstanding, the fact remains that painters see what they see based on their visual interest and experience and based on their knowledge of the traditions; they leave us the clues to their discoveries in the created work.

I verified this process two summers ago when my family and I took a month-long camping trip to Wyoming and South Dakota. Since I had learned many years earlier that open spaces failed to ignite my aesthetic interests, I was not looking forward to this trip from a painter's point of view. I simply hoped to relax and see the sights. I had made other trips west, specifically, to Colorado to visit my husband's parents on their farm in the plains south of

Pueblo and had never found a vista I wanted to paint. Despite being fueled with de Staël paintings (*e.g.*, Plate 47), I was bored by the open, brown expanse of land and the unremitting blue of the sky; even the Rockies gently breaking the horizon line could not capture and hold my attention.

But this trip came after my Barnes Foundation education and provided an unexpected treat. The Grand Teton Range, unlike the Rockies, rises up dramatically from a plateau. There is neither a gentle incline nor foothills. Seen from Jackson Lake, the mountain thrusts itself upward like New York City skyscrapers banking the Hudson River and climbs skyward with enough ridges and peaks, ice patches, and jagged granite to be thoroughly engaging. As all my work shows,* looming, decoratively intricate, massively solid visual qualities never fail to interest me. I did not have the time to paint, but I was able to spend several mornings trying to draw out, using pen on paper, those qualities of the scene that intrigued me.

The best, however, was yet to come. In Yellowstone, the weather took a turn for the worse, and gray skies, rain, and temperatures in the forties did nothing to dispel my yearly conclusion that camping without a heater and with three children and a dog was an insane way to spend a vacation. Yet, it was just those gray skies that gave me a present I did not expect.

As we slogged our way around Old Faithful and the thermal basin and tidal hot springs, the clay colors of brown, red, tan, and orange were offset by the azures and aquamarines of the bubbling thermal water. Coupled with the rainy surroundings, the flat, grayed, even colors of the land organized themselves into abstract, geometric patterns that brought to mind the paintings of Ben Nicholson (*e.g.*, Plate 46). In the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, I found myself, despite the rain and the cold, studying the peeled surfaces of the sedimentary rock; abstract expressionist paintings of Jackson Pollock (*e.g.*, Plate 44), Jean Dubuffet (*e.g.*, Plate 129), and Karel Appel (*e.g.*, Plate 45) were informing my perception and adding to my appreciation. I came away feeling as if I had seen something

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*See, for example, Plate 78.

important, even though I was wet, cold, and otherwise physically miserable.

We were back home by the end of August, and I was back painting soon after. As I worked on a downtown view of Wilmington, something odd happened. Those colors that had so impressed me during our trip found their way into my picture, and my painting took on the color-look of Wyoming. In fact, when I sold it, the purchaser told me that, although she could not explain it, something about the work reminded her of home. Where was her home? Wyoming, of course. I should add that there was nothing conscious about this on my part. I did not set out to paint Wilmington in Wyoming colors. Yet, I now found those colors wherever I looked.

This is what informed perception is all about, and the wonder of it is that it works both ways. The traditions of painting help us perceive qualities in our world that we otherwise would miss; and the qualities in our world and in the traditions of painting, if we are artists, help us to express the meaning of our visual experience our way. Perception and assimilation fill the storehouse of memory and become the enriching ingredients for future exploration and discovery.

There is, to be sure, nothing easy or haphazard about this. As E. B. White argues in *The Elements of Style,* style is not the garnish for the meat of picture making, a means by which a subject can be made to fit the popular trends of the day. It has no such separate existence; "it is non-detachable, unfilterable."* Mannerisms, tricks, and adornments fail to produce creative form because they are cosmetic. The approach to form is by way of sincerity and ongoing work.

I was able to enlighten a third-grade student on this point, and he wrote me the following note after listening to my description of the expressive process in painting:

> Dear Mrs. Bauman: Thank you for coming to show us about art. I liked the way you paint. I thought that when you want

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*2nd ed., The Macmillan Company, New York, 1972, p. 62.

> to paint you just slap some paint on paper and hope for a miracle.

Consequently, Carlyle is correct when he argues that "the tragedy of life is not so much what men suffer, but rather what they miss." What many sighted people miss is just this multitude of ways of viewing their world. In my case, the shadows created by the foliage of trees in summer float for me on grass or on sidewalk because I know Renoir's "islands of light" (*e.g.,* Plate 95); similarly, the slant of light entering a window late in a winter afternoon dramatically cuts a pattern with doorway and darkened hall beyond, because I know the atmospheric weirdness of De Chirico (*e.g.,* Plate 112). Or, much to my son's annoyance and disgust, my daughter and I find blood that was oozing from his nose and seeping onto a napkin of such intensity of color that we heatedly discuss how we would mix that color on our palette. "It's like that bright red of the roof in Van Gogh's 'Thatches,' "* she says, and I marvel at her rapid recall. With a mind educated by painting, even life's messes are not ordinary.

In all these ways, art teaches. The artist, as Miss de Mazia puts it,

> calls in the whole world of neighbors, to whom he reveals by his created piece what he discovered of aesthetic interest in his adventures in perception, what he re-created of broad human value and which, unaided by the artist's coherent expression, no one could see so well, so fully, so richly, so specifically, or, in fact, at all†

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*"Thatches in the Sunshine—Reminiscence of the North" (Plate 21).

†Violette de Mazia, "Aesthetic Quality," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Spring, 1971, The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion, Pa., p. 13.

The Barnes Foundation
The Display of its Art Collection

by VIOLETTE DE MAZIA*

THE Barnes Foundation is an educational institution which was chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1922. It opened as a school in 1925 and has functioned as such ever since. Its present educational activities include the work carried on in the school of its Arboretum and the courses and seminars in the philosophy and appreciation of art—appreciation in its meaning of enjoyment through understanding—conducted in the Foundation's Art Department.

The program offered by the Foundation's Art Department is unique in both its approach and its procedure. Based on the tenets of John Dewey's philosophy as he applied them to education in general, the program consists primarily in demonstrating the working of the objective method of investigation, familiar in the field of science, and in applying that method to the study of art.

The Art Department classes, which meet Monday through Thursday throughout the school year, are held in the galleries that house the Foundation's collection of paintings, sculpture, antique furniture and other objects. These galleries supply the main material for the course of lectures in the Art Department program, providing, in a literal sense, working laboratories for the faculty and students.

What is presented in the classes is not art history, but the means of appreciating aesthetic qualities, wherever they be found. The teaching adheres to the objective method, *i.e.,* the method of science, which is actually the crux of the entire program. Indeed, both the items making up the collection and their display were decided upon,

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planned and arranged specifically for the demonstration of the fundamental principles of aesthetics taught—that is, for the application of the objective method to the understanding of art. And, once the method is seen in action, as happens in the Foundation's class sessions, it becomes as serviceable to the student of aesthetics for further study in his field of interest as it does to the student of science for further discovery and understanding in his.

From its inception, then, the Foundation's collection was intended to serve the purposes *not* of a museum, but of a particular kind of school—a drastic difference: a museum strives, as a rule, to acquire representative examples of as many periods of art, as many artists, as many "isms," etc., as it can and exhibits its acquisitions, for the most part, according to the historical niches in which they belong;* a school such as The Barnes Foundation, in contrast, selects and assembles its materials primarily according to their ability to foster understanding of objective investigation and to help in demonstrating the principles of aesthetics.

Recognition of the intent governing an achievement or situation is invariably the *sine qua non* of intelligent judgement of its merit, and judgement based on interests extraneous to a thing's or situation's *raison d'être* is bound to be flawed. In the case of the Foundation's collection, the specific paintings and objects that make it up and the manner of their display can be properly judged only if the educational intent they are meant to serve is taken into account.

Notwithstanding, some visitors to The Barnes Foundation have faulted various arrangements of the paintings themselves and of the paintings in relation to the furniture

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*Visitors to the Foundation who have been conditioned by and accustomed to the conventional museum approach to art usually see and describe what they encounter in the Foundation's galleries as "a collection of French Impressionists"—thanks to the large number of canvasses by Renoir and Cézanne they find there and to the fact that these two artists were friends of Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, etc. In actuality, most of the paintings by Renoir and Cézanne that hang on the Foundation's walls are of their mature years, at which time the artists had moved so far away from Impressionism that there is no basis at all for classifying these works as impressionist, nor, by the same token, for classifying the Foundation's collection as French Impressionist.

and other objects for their failure to follow the conventions of a museum hanging, complaining, in particular, that the displays are crowded and that they "violate order and meaning" because of the unexpected juxtapositions of old and modern examples. Considered from the standpoint of the Foundation's educational intent, however, the displays neither are crowded nor do they "violate order and meaning." The closeness of placement and the "unexpected" juxtapositions are, in fact, purposive, and they are so for a number of reasons, but most essentially for illustrating ideas and principles necessary to the understanding of creativeness and of aesthetic quality.

Each wall, for instance, in the particular organization of its particular contents of paintings and other objects, makes up a particular "wall-picture" in the same sense that the artist-painter's particular organization of particular color units makes up his particular picture. And, like an artist's picture, too, the wall-picture is illustrative (of the artists' works it shows), decorative (by the sensuousness and variegated contents of its own color scheme and its array of patterns and rhythms of all sorts) and expressive (of broad human qualities—one wall may express a kind of power [*e.g.*, Plate 52] and others a kind of delicacy and daintiness [*e.g.*, Plate 123] or of drama [*e.g.*, Plate 116] or of simplicity [*e.g.*, Plate 60]), with each wall reflecting an individuality and creativeness in the use of traditions. Moreover, the paintings and other objects are such and are so hung that, besides being, in their various ensembles, "wall-pictures," they offer examples of certain compositional organizations found also in individual paintings* and of other aesthetic features of concern to the artist-painter.

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*To wit, the pyramidal (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 60 with Plate 100), the canopy (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 52 with Plates 8, 27, 53), the parentheses (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 125 with Plates 8, 62, 91, 99), the contained (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 122 with Plate 100), the open-ended (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 118 with Plate 105), the centrifugal or focalized (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 118 with Plate 119), the multi-steepled (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 121 with Plate 77), the enframing (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plates 58, 59 with Plate 95), the platform (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Plate 120 with Plate 62), and so forth. Compare also the plan of organization in the "wall-picture" shown on Plate 28 with the framework of Matisse's "The Music Lesson," reproduced on Plate 29: in both instances, there is a spread of items across the lower portion of the composition—a version of the platform idea—and, above, on each side of the center, a tall, narrow oblong—a Renoir painting in the case of the wall; a band-patterned area in the Matisse—which together enclose, in

As another example of the purposive character of the displays, the hanging (Plate 52) of Renoir's "The Artist's Family" (819*—Plate 53), in Room I,† with a Tintoretto (807—Plate 54) (a sixteenth-century Venetian painting) on one side and a Giorgione (816—Plate 55) (another sixteenth-century Venetian work) on the other, points up at a glance, at least for those who know what to look for in art, a creative, not imitative, use, an adaptation, not an adoption, on Renoir's part, of such features of the Venetian tradition as structural color (solidity in depth), inner glow (not superficial lighting) of the color, compositional integration in terms of color-made volumes in color-made space, and so forth.

Or, in Room XIV, the contrasts in the traditions represented on the wall (Plate 116) having as its center painting Titian's portrait of a man and boy (854) and, around it, fourteenth-century Bavarian panels (1057 and 1058), eighteenth-century Chinese paintings (2551 and 2552), late Renoirs (150, 537, 255 and 536) and an eighteenth-century piece by Guardi (790), help to make clear the differences in the character of the means (color, light, line, etc.) employed in each tradition and of their organization.

On the other hand, the wall (Plate 122), in Room XVIII, made up, save for a small Santo from New Mexico at each end, entirely of Renoirs done late in his career and illustrating the general expressiveness of Renoir's work at that

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the space between them, an upright sequence of a variety of units—paintings in the case of the wall arrangement; and, in the Matisse, a balcony, a pond and a section of foliage.

Such compositional formats as those illustrated above offer, in their own right, a measure of aesthetic satisfaction—a sense of balance, of harmony, of stability, of the fittingness of the parts to the whole, etc.—that we as human beings seek out, to one degree or another, almost instinctively in everything we do. For that reason, they are by no means absent in the hangings of paintings in museums, where, however, they have largely become conventionalized, even mechanized, giving no evidence of an awareness on the part of whoever hung the paintings of what such arrangements can provide of educational value.

*This number and all other numbers immediately following the mention of a painting refer to the Barnes Foundation catalogue number indicated on each painting's frame.

†Rooms I to XIII are located on the first floor; Rooms XIV to XXIII are located on the second floor.

time, is geared to showing also that it does so to the detriment of our perception of each picture's distinct individuality. There is a monotony produced by such a setup—a setup, incidentally, which is the rule rather than the exception in the typical museum—that does not occur in other walls of the Foundation, where, because of the nature of the arrangement of the paintings and other objects and the very juxtapositions eschewed in museum hangings, interest gets to be rekindled as each canvas is confronted, yet with the overall identity of the particular organization of items, the "wall-picture," left wholly intact (*cf., e.g.,* Plate 125, a "Renoir wall," too, but of Renoirs of various periods).

Room XII illustrates still another point. It is referred to at the Foundation as the "American" room because of the fact that each piece shown there is by an American citizen—be he born American (Glackens, Maurer, Pippin, Lawson, Francis McCarthy, Susan Cray), naturalized or an immigrant (Prendergast, Pascin, Luigi Settanni). These pieces were assembled together specifically to indicate that there are no fundamental "American" traits, particular aesthetic interests and achievements, that bind one American artist to the others. In this room, too, the interspersed arrangement of the contents (*e.g.,* Plates 59 and 60) aids in drawing out the individuality of the components—the characteristics of Glackens' paintings, for instance, setting off and, in turn, being set off by the contrasting characteristics that distinguish Pascin's, Maurice Prendergast's and Maurer's expressions.

Room XIII offers a good vantage for a quick recapitulation of each one of the main stages of development in Renoir's career. To begin, on the wall (Plate 117) with Cézanne's "Man and Skull" (929) at the center, there is, to the Cézanne's right, "Lise" (874), dating from the late 1860s, which shows the head and shoulders of a girl in a yellow hat—a pre-Renoir Renoir, so to speak. On the opposite wall (Plate 125) are "Two Women in the Park" (289), "Luncheon" (45) and "Mlle Durand-Ruel" (950)—all three of the middle 1870s; "Mother and Child" (15) and the beach scene "Guernsey" (10), both of the 1880s, hang on the wall (Plate 124) facing the windows. Then, under

"Lise," is "Bathers in the Forest" (901), of the 1890s, and, pairing with "Lise," at the left of Cézanne's "Man and Skull" hangs "Woman Wearing a Turban" (230), likewise of the 1890s; "Nude on Green Background" (28), of 1902, is located at the right end of the "Mlle Durand-Ruel wall" (Plate 125) and balances "After the Bath" (142), of 1910, at the other end. Over "Luncheon" on the same wall is a seated nude in an interior (16), of *ca.* 1915–1917, and over "Two Women in the Park" hangs "Standing Odalisque" (1136), of *ca.* 1918, the year before the artist's death.

In Room VII, the central vertical unit (Plate 14) of one of the walls is made up of what to the casual visitor may appear to be an incongruous assemblage of disparate things—an eighteenth-century Pennsylvania German dower chest, a Courbet painting showing a nude in a landscape (810), a flowerpiece by Renoir (991), one of Renoir's small studies of a woman's head (46) and, at the very top of the wall unit, a wrought-iron Pennsylvania German latch with a tulip motif.

Because of characteristics that belong both to the selected paintings and objects and to their organization, the viewer, in his "informed" perception, is readily led to transfer qualities appearing in one item into the makeup of the others and to grasp, through the specific instance presented, the meaning of unity and variety and the working of transferred qualities in the attainment of unity. To illustrate: the five items are so arranged as to compose a particularly proportioned pyramid and, by that fact, have in common, to start with, their individual participation in, their contribution to, such an organization, even though each item contributes differently to it—the dower chest providing the pyramid's base, the Courbet and the Renoir flowerpiece its body, the Renoir head its upper part, and the latch its apex.

These relationships are, however, responsible for only a superficial kind of unity among the components of the pyramidal grouping, albeit a unity that opens the way to and facilitates the perception of other unifying elements that might exist.

A more organic sort of unity, more easily seen in part

because of the mutual rôles of the main constituents in the formation of the pyramid, is established by features that recur in the various components, which recurrence allows the viewer to transfer, in his discovery of them, something of the specific identity of one item into that of another. The dark blackish green color and the waxy surface of the dower chest, for instance, have a counterpart in the color and surface of the Courbet, leading the viewer, again, to see each of the items enriched by meanings expressed in the other—the ultimate function of transferred qualities. In like fashion, the relative heaviness and blackishness in the shadows of the Renoir flowerpiece, of unusual occurrence in Renoir's work, more than echo the qualities just noted in the dower chest and the Courbet and, as well as permitting a further transfer of qualities, bring that unifying characteristic into the upper part of the wall composition. In the Renoir head, it is the gentle curve of the main unit that carries on the unity, as it continues, we might say, the graceful bend of the flowers in the picture below it. And the wrought-iron tulip latch, apparently "unsharing," apparently incongruous in its immediate context of paintings, sends the viewer's eye back to the tulip pattern on the dower chest at the base and to the character of rigidity that qualifies its drawing—not dissimilar to that of the tulip in the latch.

This wall organization illustrates a unity effected, on the part of both the viewer and the one who thus arranged the objects, by a transfer of qualities belonging to those objects, which unity, as in a successfully unified work of art, does not compromise the individuality of each of the organization's components—indeed, it augments it—and creates no monotony.

The above-described wall unit shows, in its illustration of unity and variety by means of transferred qualities, what occurs, with fuller involvement of all participants, in what establishes unity among the varied components of a work of art: essential qualities distinctive of one component are transferred into the others, with no loss in the identity of each component, no monotony, and with the achievement of a sense of continuity, unity, teamwork among them all.

That is what happens in, for example, Renoir's "Girl in Yellow Hat" (299—Plate 1), in Room I, with the qualities of delicacy, fluidity and gentleness which pervade the color units, the line, the space, and so on that make the painting up; and it is what happens in Cézanne's "Woman [Mme Cézanne] in Green Hat" (141—Plate 31), also in Room I, with the qualities of positiveness and power that are variedly, yet consistently, present in its colors, brush work, and so forth.

Other examples of instructive "wall-pictures" which serve in the study of such concepts as unity and variety, transferred qualities, etc., may be noted in Room XIV (Plate 56) in the harmonizing color relationships of the Daumier painting (22), the pewter of the candlesticks and box and the color scheme of the eighteenth-century Pennsylvania German dower chest below it. Again in Room XIV, the same principle of unity attained by way of transferred qualities is clearly illustrated (Plate 57) by the relationship of the Pennsylvania German dower chest—*that* one—the objects upon it—*those* objects—the andirons on the floor—*those* andirons—to *that* Rousseau painting of a jungle scene (584) and *that* Utrillo (381) that hang above them.

The compositional balance diversely established in the makeup of the Foundation's "wall-pictures" is, understandably, neither of a strictly symmetrical sort nor constructed of identical units. Rather, it is—again, as occurs in a successfully composed painting—a balance of equivalents, with, possibly—as also occurs in paintings*—elements of surprise, not-quite-expected-yet-not-disruptive units which function to enliven the composition to which they belong. The Goya portrait (5), in Room VI, for instance, acts as an element of surprise in its context of a wall (Plate 123) dominated by Renoirs. The same is true of the carved wooden panels on the "El Greco wall" (Plate 121), in Room

*For example, the spot of light in the left distance in Renoir's "Nude and Tree" (284—Plate 24), in Room VII, and the red sash of the girl standing at the right in Renoir's "Guernsey" (10—Plate 94), in Room XIII.

III, and of the wrought-iron objects* interspersed among paintings throughout the collection. In fact, the diversity of the juxtapositioning of objects and paintings in the "wall-pictures" gives to the collection as a whole that animating, enlivening character that makes the seeing of it easier and each element in its composition ultimately more accessible.

With the wall display (Plates 126 and 127) in Room XIV, built around Rousseau's jungle scene (584), painting after painting provides a surprise and, with it, a renewal of interest: a Renoir (126) at one end balances a Redon (2093) at the other, while a Soutine figure piece (271) pairs off with a Veronese Baptism (800), a Tintoretto biblical incident (823) with a Van Goyen water scene (843), and a Courbet portrait of a woman (824) with a Tintoretto portrait of a senator (836), not to mention the interplay of these with the paintings by Renoir, Cézanne and Utrillo and the fifteen-century Spanish and sixteenth-century Flemish works, as well as the nineteenth-century New Mexican Santos, that hang above them. And, so long as perception is not prejudiced, looking not fettered by conventions and extraneous expectations, one finds that each of these paintings is given the opportunity of being seen for what it is precisely *because* it is *not* set in the context of others of its period or of similar subject or school, but is placed among companions of sufficient difference to bring out and emphasize each picture's own "itness."

In assessing the Foundation's collection and the manner of its display, the visitor should keep in mind that, although the "wall-pictures" result from a procedure similar to that of the artist-painter as he creates his picture—*viz.*, making a specific arrangement of the means at his disposal so as to satisfy an overall intent and bring about a new set of unified aesthetic qualities—the artist-painter has practically complete freedom in his choice of colors, etc., and organization, whereas the creator of the Foundation's "wall-pictures" could use only those paintings, frames and

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*A collection in itself of antique pieces ranging in date from the early Roman period to the nineteenth century and originating from a variety of European countries, as well as from the United States.

objects that happened to be available and that were acquired not for *that* purpose, but which entered the collection primarily as teaching tools.

This limitation in freedom is illustrated in Room XIII by the wall (Plate 117) having Cézanne's "Man and Skull" (929) at its center—a wall organized as an entity by the use of paintings selected primarily for the level of aesthetic achievement reached in them and brought together also by the pyramidal formation of their grouping, the pattern of their shapes, the adequate balance among their frames* and by a general, pervasive low-key tonality. In this instance, however, the idea of the "wall-picture" is to a degree let down by one of its components, the Van Gogh (720) at the right end, wherein the high-key tonality tends to take the viewer's eye away from the other paintings in the ensemble. An oval-shaped Tintoretto, perhaps, put in place of the Van Gogh, would, in all likelihood, re-establish a sensitive variety within the toned-down color effect of the wall display, restoring the balance of the composition and permitting each canvas to say what it has to say directly and clearly. Nevertheless, as it is, with its easily-shown and easy-to-grasp failure in unity, this "wall-picture" helps the demonstration of possibly more subtle and less clear-cut failures in unity that occur in individual paintings—such as, for instance, in the red roof in Van Gogh's "Thatches in the Sunshine—Reminiscence of the North" (136—Plate 21), in Room VIII, with the somewhat too assertive effect of its color in the general color context of the canvas—as well as the further investigation of the concept itself of unity.†

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*The majority of the carved frames in the collection are antique French frames dating from the eighteenth century. There are also antique examples from other European countries and modern frames carved by Charles Prendergast (*e.g.*, Plate 84) and other artists.

Each frame was selected not only for its own aesthetic features, but also for its appropriateness to the painting it enframes—setting it off and not competing with it for attention—and to the painting's context of other paintings and frames on its particular wall.

†For still other examples of class demonstrations in which "wall-pictures" are made to play a part, see: Violette de Mazia, "Creative Distortion," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Vol. IV, No. 1, (Spring 1973), The Barnes

Visitors to the Foundation have complained that paintings hanging high on the walls or over doorways cannot properly be seen, nor can the artists' name-plates on their frames be read easily or, on occasion, at all. The Foundation cannot but recognize that these conditions impose a handicap on the visitors to the galleries and regrets that such problems can exist. Nonetheless, the Foundation's educational intent has to prevail. As illustrated above, the particular placement of the paintings and objects is of importance to the Foundation's teaching. And there is also to be mentioned in this context, that, for the class work, paintings, etc., are moved from their usual locations and set up in temporary arrangements on racks and easels as they are needed for specific studies and demonstrations.*

One other unexpected characteristic of the collection warrants an explanation. That is the absence, upsetting to many visitors unfamilar with the Foundation's philosophy and educational work, of labels providing the titles of the paintings and the names of the objects. It is an intentional omission, done, once more, for the sake of the educational program. Except in serving the practical purpose of identification, titles and subject-descriptions can easily mislead and seriously interfere with the process of perception and understanding, for they tend to promote irrelevant preconceptions and expectations, and they more than tend to draw the viewer into checking up on the accuracy of the rendering according to the title or into reading into the picture or object whatever meaning the title or name itself may have for him, thereby deflecting his attention from any intrinsic aesthetic significance the makeup of the picture or object, as the *thing* it is, might offer. Thus, whatever be the title of a painting, the student in the Foundation's classes is made aware of the fact that, though certain units may *say* apple, figure, tree, whatnot, there *is* no apple, no

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Foundation Press, Merion Station, PA, pp. 7–8, 17–18; "The Decorative Aspect in Art," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Vol. VI, No. 1, (Spring 1975), the Barnes Foundation Press, Merion Station, PA, pp. 20; and "*E Pluribus Unum*—Part IV," *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* Vol. VIII, No. 2, (Autumn 1977), The Barnes Foundation Press, Merion Station, PA, pp. 23, 23–24 ftn, 24, 37–40, 41.

*Otherwise, the "wall-pictures" remain unchanged.

figure, no tree or whatnot on the canvas, but only color units, specific in what they are and significant in their intrinsic qualities and in what they accomplish in their interrelationships within the context of other colors, lines, and so forth.

Modigliani's picture (180—Plate 37), in Room XI, for example, is made up of predominantly oval color shapes which form, among themselves, a graceful rhythm, a repetition with variety, that is not unlike, in essence, the rhythmic sequence of the units of sound in a poem or in a musical composition. It is a rhythmic effect that the student might not perceive were he looking for what the title identifies for him. Nor would he be likely to see that the artist sets off that rhythm by establishing a contrast between it and the rhythm of rectilinear elements in other areas of the picture and that, by introducing a dark outline around the units, he gives emphasis to the various rhythmic shapes. Modigliani does *depict* something of what his subject was—which is what the title, "Girl in Sunday Clothes," happens to tell of and which can truly have no aesthetic interest as such—but he *expresses,* in an individual way, new shades of meaning of such qualities as static gracefulness, gentleness, subtlety, delicacy, sense of conviction, structural solidity, unity and variety, all of which are *of* the painted canvas and are what, fundamentally, constitutes art's concern. Being given the picture's title as the first point of reference, on the other hand, the viewer is encouraged to ignore the chief overall concern and possible aesthetic significance or identity of the painted canvas and, as has happened often among so-called knowledgeable visitors, to disapprove of or condemn the distorted drawing, modelling and color of the depicted girl without ever realizing what the painting as a painting, as the new object it is, actually conveys.*

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*The irrelevance of titles to the meaning of the paintings themselves is borne out by the fact that they are often arbitrarily, sometimes accidentally and sometimes by design, changed. A case in point is the title of the painting by Renoir shown on Plate 53, which was originally called by the artist *"Le Départ Pour la Promenade"* ("Setting Out for a Stroll"), but which has since been called, in turn, "Renoir's Family," "The Artist's Family" and just "Family." What, then, of the meaning of the painting? And, though the art world accepts these latter titles, there is to be remarked that the young girl at the right was the daughter of a neighbor of the artist and not a member of the family at all. This is to say that,

Much more is there to be said with regard to the educational function of the wall displays in the teaching program at The Barnes Foundation. However, as always, . . . one must, perforce, stop *some*where.

In summary, the collection of paintings, antique furniture and other objects at The Barnes Foundation is not simply an adventitious accumulation of works of art made passively accessible in the Foundation's galleries to the casual onlooker. On the contrary, it is, in both plan and function, as we have already observed, a laboratory—specifically, a laboratory for investigating the objective method of understanding and its application to the study of the fundamental principles of aesthetic expression. Every item, every display is there for and necessary to the carrying out of the Foundation's educational program, in the same way that the materials in a chemistry laboratory or in a laboratory stocked and arranged for the study of physics or biology, etc., are there for and necessary to a successful, usable educational experience, *i.e.,* one which equips the student with *working* knowledge of the concepts with which to explore and unravel the meaning of whatever he encounters in his field of interest. It is in this regard that the collection is, in and of itself and in the manner of its display, a vital asset to the Foundation's teaching, an

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while titles may supply information, as easily wrong as right, *about* the created object, they do not in the least indicate what *of* the work makes it be, or fail to be, art.

The above comment is equally applicable to the kind of information one reads on the labels affixed on the walls next to the paintings, etc., in the usual museum display. Although some museum directors and curators have begun to question the merit of these wall-labels in helping the public to understand works of art, many persist in asserting that the material they provide—*e.g.,* "why someone's left ear was cut off"— allows the man who walks in off the street to see the work "better." This attitude also prevails with regard to the typical fact-laden museum catalogue: in a review of a recent exhibition at a major museum, a well-known art critic, voicing a not-out-of-the-ordinary dismay, lamented, "Unfortunately, the catalogue will not be ready until the fall, and the pictures will have to speak for themselves."

indispensable tool in the implementation of its course of education in the philosophy and appreciation of art.

To state it explicitly, the collection's reason for existing, the intent that guided its acquisition and display, is what justifies its being what it is—a school's collection, *this* school's collection, *The Barnes Foundation* School's collection. It is hoped, therefore, that it will be looked upon, judged, understood and appreciated as such.

Reflections on Tom Wolfe's *The Painted Word**

by A. Newton Malerman**

The Painted Word† is a book by Tom Wolfe. In it, the author speaks about certain developments in modern art from the point of view of their relationships to events both within and outside of the art world. These I shall, in this essay, review.

In approaching the topic, however, I was struck with the fact that the course of art history has often hinged on events extraneous to the development of art itself. So, to set the stage for my discussion of Mr. Wolfe's thesis, I should like first to take the reader back to the period in and around the year 1870.

Two events at that time, totally unrelated to the mainstream of art development, profoundly affected the art world in Europe. One of these concerned a monumental engineering feat; the other, an unusual invention. The invention was the use of gelatin emulsion for photographic plates—a technique that made modern photography a practical possibility. The engineering miracle was the opening of the Suez Canal, as a result of which ships no longer had to go around the horn of Africa, but could bring trade goods from the Orient by this more direct route.

These events could not have happened at a more propitious time for the purposes of modern art. As with all seminal movements, modern art did not spring from a void. The soil, so to speak, had to be ready for the new

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*This essay covers, in essence, the contents of a talk given by the author to the Seminar of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

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†Bantam Book/Published by arrangement with Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Inc. Copyright 1977 by Tom Wolfe.

seed. Indeed, in this instance, the ground had even been plowed ahead of time.

Artists had been interested in Oriental art for some time. In 1868, two years before the opening of the Canal, Manet painted a portrait of Zola (Plate 30), in the background of which both a Japanese woodcut and a Chinese scroll appear. Other pre-Canal paintings also show that artists of the time were attracted to Orientalia (*e.g.*, Plates 32 and 72), as does Monet's house at Givenchy, which displays a great number of Japanese woodcut prints on its walls.

After the Canal opened, Europe became the recipient of all kinds of exotic goods from the East. Of particular interest were the Japanese woodcuts, with their broad color planes, clean-cut outlines, and their distorted perspective, all of which had a great impact on the art of the times.

But which came first, the chicken or the egg? Just as the work of Manet, Degas, Monet, and others helped prepare the way for the new vision required to appreciate Oriental art, so the opening of the Suez Canal, with the consequent proliferation of Orientalia, helped to make the work of the early-Impressionists more understandable to the general public. Thus, one could at once argue that the Suez Canal resulted in the acceptance of the early-Impressionist vision and, with equal passion, assert that it was the interest of the artists in Orientalia that made Japanese art so acceptable when it arrived through the Canal.

The other event that helped "plow the ground" for the coming of modern art again had no direct connection with painting at all. Cameras had been around long before 1870. Indeed, a Frenchman named Daguerre had, in 1839, patented a photographic process which achieved intriguing photographs. The daguerrotypes that his process produced did, however, require thirty minutes of exposure time. The new gelatin emulsion, by contrast, needed but 1/200th of a second for its exposure. Daguerrotypes, then, were limited to very stationary, immobile objects, while the gelatin emulsion could capture almost anything. Thus did the emulsion provide an alternative recording method to that of painting, and notables of those days who might

have sat for their painted portraits were now fascinated by photographic images of themselves.

This is not to imply that realistic, literal portrayals were the only function of artists of the time. Monet and Renoir, for example, who summered together in the year 1869, just before the Canal opened, spent their time painting what we now call early-Impressionist canvasses—hardly what we would call literal presentations. Still, was it the new use of the camera that moved them away from more orthodox ways of painting?

The winds of modernism were certainly in the air before gelatin emulsion was invented. In *The Art In Painting,* by Albert C. Barnes, there is a chapter entitled "The Transition to Modern Painting."* In that chapter, Dr. Barnes eloquently traces the roots of modern art and the movement away from literalism all the way back to Giotto. He also notes, "It is clear that impressionism made a sharp break with the traditions that preceded it,"† and, later, that "the chief point of difference between the old and the new may be said to be that the moderns exhibit greater interest in a design which depends more upon its plastic content than upon subject . . . for its esthetic value."‡

The opening of the Suez Canal and the new practicality of the camera could certainly have contributed to this new direction. These events, building on the instincts of the artists of the time, could have helped precipitate the coming of modern art.

All of the above is meant, as I remarked earlier, to provide a background for my discussion of Tom Wolfe's theory about how some popular modern art movements in America were engendered. I should add that the start of these movements may also have hinged on events even more extraneous and ephemeral than gelatin emulsion and the Suez Canal.

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*Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, Third Edition, 1937, pp. 291–299.

†*Ibid.,* p. 291.

‡*Ibid.,* p. 291.

According to Tom Wolfe, these modern movements began, in part, with the Cubist painter, Georges Braque. Now, Braque was apparently a very sincere artist, and he was also fond of philosophical conjecture. Indeed, he kept notebooks full of his musings. One of his pronouncements goes as follows: "The painter thinks in forms and colors. The aim is not to *re*constitute an anecdotal fact, but to *constitute* a pictorial fact."

Braque did not use the word "forms" to mean embodiments of personal expression, but to mean shapes or volumes or, perhaps, units. And, as we have seen, artists had moved away from merely recording anecdotes. But what was important in what Braque said is, according to Wolfe, that the main concern of an artist is what he creates within the four corners of the canvas itself.

Thunderbolts and flashes of lightning! It was a true, marvelous, intelligent, stimulating concept, and one towards which the art world had been moving for some time. With Braque, however, the concept became part of the conventional wisdom.

When Monet and Renoir were breaking new ground that fine summer of 1869, they did not sit down and formulate a theory. They exulted in the atmosphere of what they painted, and, in that creative joy, they forged a new vision, at the same time adapting much of what had come before. The theory came later.

Mr. Wolfe observes that Braque was a wordy fellow, but that for him, too, the work came first and the theory later—over drinks in a café, perhaps, or on a new page in his notebook. Nevertheless, these pronouncements of his fell on ears ready to sanctify them, and their utterance might well have marked the creation of "the word" in art.

I could continue this historical narrative to trace further what happened in the art world vis-a-vis the growing importance of "the word." I would prefer, instead, now to turn, by way of illustration, to a consideration of the painting reproduced on Plate 61 along the lines of the approach

of the leading critics of the period during which this type of canvas was emergent.

This work is representative of a type of modern painting called Non-objective and exemplifies the sort of modern art that Mr. Wolfe sees as having sprung up from Braque's café utterances. Briefly stated, its genesis was this:

> As the cubists and other modernists had correctly realized, a painting was not a window through which one could peer into the distance. The three-dimensional effects were sheer illusion. A painting was [simply] a flat plane with paint on it. Earlier abstract artists had understood the importance of flatness in the simple sense of painting in two dimensions, but they hadn't known how to go beyond that. They still used paint in such a way that it divided neatly into lines, forms, contours, and colors, just as it had in pre-modern days.
>
> What was needed was *purity*—a style in which lines, forms, contours, and colors all became unified on the flat surface.

With the picture shown on Plate 61, then, we have a painting in which the principle of flatness is upheld. The integrity of the picture plane is here to be immediately grasped when one permits the opticalities of the arrangement of paint within the confines of the canvas to penetrate the logics of readjustment. In readjusting to the shimmer of the paint, one's mind formulates exquisitely miniaturized hypotheses which are sparked by confronting the art.

Without violating the integrity of the picture plane, the artist has, in certain areas, applied the paint thickly enough to cause it to run. Indeed, one can picture the artist so gorged with emotion and overloaded with paint that he hurled himself and his brushes at the canvas as if in hand-to-hand combat with fate! There! There! *There!* in furious swipes of the brush on canvas. In these drips and spatters

of unchained Id, one can perceive the artist's emotion itself—still alive in the finished product.

The strength of this painting lies in the emphatic surface of the picture, which it was the artist's concern to maintain and intensify in all that thick, fuliginous flatness which began—but only began—to be the strong point of late Cubism. It is the tension, inherent in the constructed, recreated flatness of the surface—the concentration of texture and tactile qualities—that produces the strength of this work. This painting, that is to say, is not only Non-objective, but also a masterpiece of "Perceptual Abstraction."

Cubism freed art from the nineteenth-century view of a painting as a window through which you saw an illusion of the real world.

Early Abstract work, like that of the Abstract Expressionists, had advanced a step further by establishing a painting as an independent object, as real as a chair or table. The Perceptual Abstractionists completed the process by turning the art object *into a piece of pure perception.* By creating special optical effects on the flat surface, the artist has removed the art from the realm of the outside world and has taken it into that terra incognita between the cornea and the brain.

Just as Cubism was an abstraction of what went before—the painter of this canvas, and other Perceptual Expressionists have given us nothing short of a dazzling abstraction of an abstraction.

By now the reader is probably a bit bored and, most likely, a bit puzzled. Yet, I sense that he, like me, is nonetheless somewhat fascinated by this heady, seductive stuff. There is a stimulation in delving into arcane theories, in speculating on new and esoteric philosophies. I trust, too, however, that the reader has noticed that nothing I have said since embarking on the study of the painting on Plate 61 has had anything whatever to do with art as art, although the words are those that art critics, aestheticians, gallery directors, curators, and, indeed, many artists have uttered about painting over the past two decades.

It is undoubtedly true that the art world, and particularly

the American art world, had developed a series of philosophies, stables of superstar artists, a clutch of pontificating aestheticians, and herds of disciples—all of whom, according to Wolfe, are heir to poor Braque, with his predilection for theorizing about his work. My personal feelings are that Braque is taking a bum rap: if the world had not been ready for "the word," a dozen Braques, using television, radio, and supersonic loudspeakers, could not have made "the word" important.

So, just what is "the word," and how did it become so important?

On Sunday morning, April 28, 1974, an irreverent, acerbic essayist, Tom Wolfe, was reading the *New York Times.* In the Arts and Leisure section was a review of an exhibition of realistic art written by Hilton Kramer, the dean of the art critics. What Mr. Kramer had to say stunned Tom Wolfe and led to the writing of *The Painted Word.* Kramer's words were these:

> Realism does not lack its partisans, but it does rather conspicuously lack a persuasive theory. Given the nature of our intellectual commerce with works of art to lack a persuasive theory is to lack something crucial—the means by which our experience of individual works is joined to our understanding of the values they signify.

In other words, without a theory, art is not art, nor is it understandable. Or, in still other words, the philosophy is the measure of the art, rather than the by-product of it. "The word" is all-important.

Mr. Wolfe was incensed to realize that "the word" had been imbued with such significance. "Now, at last," said he, "on April 28, 1974, I could see. I had gotten it backward all along. Not 'seeing is believing,' you ninny, but 'believing is seeing,' for modern art has become completely literary: the paintings and other works exist only to illustrate the

text." And, in his irreverent way, Mr. Wolfe then went on to trace the development of "the word" as the *raison d'être* for modern painting.

As Mr. Wolfe paints his word picture, we can clearly see the two main segments of the art world. On the one hand are the artists, arriving in New York by the busload and finding lofts in East Village and Soho. New York is their destination because, since World War II, it has been the center of the art world, and those artists, it is intimated, who choose to work in Grand Rapids, Little Falls, or Philadelphia, automatically exclude themselves from the ranks of the first-string, internationally important art figures. And on the other hand are the gallery owners, museum curators, critics, and art educators, who constitute the establishment of that art world society.

Mr. Wolfe says that the art world comprises perhaps ten thousand souls. These are the *culturati* of eight cities, namely, Rome, Milan, Paris, London, Berlin, Munich, Düsseldorf, and New York, the last of these having nearly three thousand representatives.

A paragraph in *The Painted Word* describes the exclusivity of that society:

> The notion that the public accepts or rejects anything in modern art, the notion that the public scorns, ignores, fails to comprehend, allows to wither, crushes the spirit of, or commits any other crime against art . . . is merely romantic fiction. . . . The public? The public plays no part in the process whatever. The public is not invited. It gets a printed announcement later.

With literature, the number of books sold determines largely the fame of an author. A painter, however, paints only one of a kind, and his fame often depends, therefore, on the decision of a very few from the small society of the establishment of the art world.

Mr. Wolfe recounts one example from the 1960s of this selective process in action. The most influential museum at that time was the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Each spring, its directors, Alfred Barr and Dorothy Miller, would venture out of the building, hop in a cab, and be driven down to Soho. Word of their outing would spread. "They're on the way!" All kinds of maneuvering would take place to attract their attention and to steer them into one place or another. Upon arrival, the two would wander around, touring artists' lofts, poking into galleries, stopping to chat at the three cafés most frequented by the *avant-garde*. Their intent was to find something unique and significant for their fall exhibition.

Any artist or group selected for exhibition during this annual trek was, of course, touched with fame. Not only had the artist or the group received the Museum's stamp of approval and thus been assigned a niche, however impermanent, in the halls of the elect in art, but the followers of the hallowed style, too, were assured of finding favor in the galleries, at least until the next fall, when a new recipient of the mantle of approbation would reign.

In effect, then, the tone of each year's art season was set by a mere two people. Even today, this tendency persists, though the number of tone-setters has increased. Indeed, there is a great deal of pressure on museum curators everywhere to come up with a new blockbuster, to discover a new "ism." One can easily picture the curators at the Whitney, for example, frantically checking how often their turnstiles click as against those at the Museum of Modern Art, and being traded, like slumping baseball players, when they fail to anticipate a new trend in time for the big fall show.

Just how did "the word" become so important? Mr. Wolfe traces its chronology. Through World War II and after, New York replaced Paris as the center of the modern art movement. As in Paris, in New York several groups of artists dominated the entire subculture, each group united by a general approach to art, by the fact that the members frequented the same café, or, perhaps, by the sharing of a political belief. The weekend gatherings of these coteries

started to attract the attention of non-artists who were nonetheless interested in art. Thus, the meetings at the Eighth Street Club, the Cedar Tavern on University Place, the galleries on Tenth street, and so on, grew to include dealers, collectors, critics, and writers, along with the painters, and the discussions and arguments branched out into an assortment of topics, but primarily centered on left-wing politics.

From these meetings, two spokesmen emerged—first, Clement Greenberg, who wrote for *Horizon Magazine,* and, later, Harold Rosenberg, who lectured widely and wrote for such publications as *Art News.* These two were not like the uptown critics, who stayed away from the halls of Bohemia. Their writings were esoteric enough and their politics radical enough to belong to the lower New York milieu, and, after the war, that milieu was buzzing. It was an exciting time, a time in which something was ready to pop.

Again, one of those moot questions about the course of history arises. Did these two art writers appropriate the philosophy of Hans Hoffman, Josef Albers, De Kooning, Pollock, *et al.,* and, so to speak, "put words to the music," or did, instead, their words actually define and shape the movement? In either eventuality, "Abstract Expressionism" was born, and Greenberg and Rosenberg made a career of bringing the latest news about it out of the studios and cafés. And they related that news in terms that were mind-bending.

Medieval clerics spent whole careers on the intriguing question of how many angels could fit on the head of a pin. Indeed, such metaphysical questions are intriguing, even if they are meaningless. The words used earlier to describe the painting shown on Plate 61 were compiled from philosophical writings of such modern-day critics as those mentioned above. Their arguments, like arguments about the number of angels that could perch on the head of a pin, did intellectually stimulate people. After all, you did not have to paint to be able to talk like an artist; you could prove you were "with it" and have a whale of a time sitting in a café, discussing the latest philosophies. Because all of this was heady stuff—in fact, the lifeblood of the New

York life-style—these theories were repeatedly argued, and writers from more and more journals hopped on the bandwagon.

The painting they sought to define was, indeed, virtually incomprehensible to the public at large. The expounded philosophies and theories, however, were understandable, even with one's eyes closed, and they became "the word." At first, the art public, the curators, the aestheticians, and the art world as a whole were titillated by it, but, as time went by, the theories became orthodoxy. Still, the stage was set, for, as exemplified by Hilton Kramer's critique, quoted earlier, of the realists, no art movement since had a chance unless someone appended a theory to it.

From there, Wolfe traces "the word" as it progressed through Pop art, Perceptual Expressionism, Minimalism, and, in his epilogue, Realism. He only briefly alludes to Conceptual art, which flourished after his essay was published. In any case, by the time of the reign of the Conceptualists, "the word" had become so important that it was made part of the work itself. This phenomenon was typified by an opus at the Whitney biennial show "Sculpture in America" of a few years ago, which consisted of rocks strewn on the floor to surround a long scroll upon which were words, words, words.

There is, I might mention, nothing original about Conceptual art as it exists today. Open any page of the book *Georges Braque—Illustrated Notebooks,* and a perfect example sits before you, with, however, this difference: in the current instances, as opposed to those in the *Notebooks,* words are the *prime* feature, to the point at which the painting, the sculpture, the construct serve better as literature than as visual art.

Tom Wolfe was by no means the only person to take note of Hilton Kramer's critique of the realist show and his declaration that, without a theory, art could not fulfill its function. Apparently, the Realists, too, learned a lesson, for their 1982 show at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts featured lots of words, in some cases in the form of huge placards that appropriated at least as much attention as the works themselves.

Isaac Stern once said, "You don't use the music to play the violin; you use the violin to play the music." It is the occurrence of the converse of this idea in the art world that Mr. Wolfe demonstrates in *The Painted Word, i.e.,* that, there, the music is, in fact, used to play the violin. With this observation, unfortunately, Mr. Wolfe stops.

In reflecting on Wolfe's essay, one cannot help wishing that Mr. Wolfe had studied "the art in painting" at The Barnes Foundation. In the course of his career, Dr. Barnes, too, locked horns with the art establishment—all this taking place a good many years before Wolfe's book. Mr. Wolfe, like Dr. Barnes, admirably and legitimately dissected the establishment, but he was content to leave it at that, while Dr. Barnes was not.

The Barnes Foundation goes that extra mile. It provides those of us who want to educate themselves in "learning to see" with a valuable tool, one which enables us to approach a work of art and make an independent judgement about what is there of merit—that is, to approach it objectively. Then are we able to appreciate a work for what it is, what it expresses, for, that is, its intrinsic qualities.

In reading Wolfe's book, one could easily fall into the trap of dismissing all Abstract Expressionism, all Pop Art, all Minimalism, etc., without even glancing at the actual works or of yielding to the temptation to pass off all Jackson Pollocks as creations of Clement Greenberg. Whether any given work deserves acclaim or dismissal from the point of view of art depends not on a supposed adherence or lack of it to some "ism" or other, but on what is there on the canvas.

During my first year of study at The Barnes Foundation, a member of my class interrupted a demonstration in which a Picasso painting was being discussed to ask how much the picture was worth. Miss de Mazia, our teacher, replied that she did not know exactly what Dr. Barnes had *paid* for it—perhaps ninety-five dollars—but that it was *worth* only what it was intrinsically, what it expressed of aesthetic significance to the rest of mankind.

This statement is indicative of a profound and abiding

attitude towards art, an attitude that lies at the core of the Foundation's teaching. And, were this understanding of the real basis of worth present in the world at large, the importance of "the word" would be minimal, and art as art would be accessible to the general public. As Mr. Wolfe's book reminds us, such art philosophies as those embodied in "the word" and disseminated by most museums, art publications, and the like are generally counter-productive to the development of an intelligent grasp of the essentials of aesthetic expression.

Even those who have not had the opportunity to learn the objective approach to the study of art as taught at The Barnes Foundation can follow certain practices that would help them avoid being hoodwinked or intimidated by "the word" in its many manifestations. First, I suggest that reviews of art exhibits be read only after seeing a show—if at all. If we can train ourselves to be aware of just what is there on the canvas in the sculptures, etc., we will not need the critics. Remember, critics often have some axe to grind. Second, we should question what sounds like nonsense. When we hear a museum docent say that a painting is "great" art, we have every right to ask why. It is astounding that the most complex of theories can be left floundering by that simple three-letter word. Third, we should work at distinguishing ideas *about* a painting from those *of* it—that is, we should look at and see what is before our eyes and, thus, comprehensible through a *visual* experience.

My wife and I once taught an elementary-school art program, during which we were given a stunning reminder not to assume anything *about* art. It was the first day of school, and all supplies were not in yet, including most of the paints we would be using. One second-grader was, however, just itching to paint, so I set up an easel for that child with what materials we had. That night I got a call at home from a very distraught mother. She was sure that her child had undergone a serious trauma, for that is what an all-red painting "signifies." The mother came to the school the next day to verify that I was not just trying to placate her with my explanation, but that red was, indeed, the only color we had on hand.

What this mother did with regard to her child's painting is not unlike what the critics, etc., do when they use "the word" as the yardstick of merit for judging works of art. She carried with her certain preconceptions of what this or that feature means and, when she found one of those features in her child's work, saw only the meaning she happened to attach to that feature, rather than the meaning of the work as an individual expression of a picture idea—this latter meaning being revealed not by what red color might be purported to mean in and of itself, before the child used it for *her* purposes, but by how the child organized that color to say what she wanted to say. And what she happened to have wanted to say, and did say, had, in fact, nothing to do with trauma psychologically associated with the color red.

There is a Breughel painting called "The Unfaithful Shepherd." It is rather less complex than most Breughels we know, but we could study it for hours using the tools of objective analysis—line, color, space, composition, transferred values, unity and variety, etc. Historically, that painting, which depicts a wolf eating a sheep while the shepherd's attention is elsewhere, was a powerful political statement: Breughel was protesting the fact that his king's attention to foreign matters left his "flock" threatened because of his neglect. But, contrary to the usual view, that historical aspect, interesting in its own right as it might be, has nothing whatever to do with the painting as a painting, *i.e.,* with its aesthetic content. What would be the standard of judgement about the canvas, which would not change one iota, if our language lacked an analogy between king and shepherd and subjects and flock? Or if Breughel's king happened to have tended his subjects with great care? What would the mother have thought of the painting if the child in my elementary class had happened to have had only a vat of green paint at her disposal?

One of my early inklings of what makes art art came when my wife and I engaged in our initial year of teaching. Temple University had a lab school with some exceptional kids. One of our first-graders, busily painting away, completely covered her paper with a truly "fuliginous" gray.

"But, Jenny," I protested, "the paper is already gray." "Sure," she said, "but now it's a *wet* gray!"

That distinction, made by a six-year old, made me see paint in a new way. To this day, I cannot look at a Soutine, for example, without remembering that lesson Jenny taught me—one of the first in my venture in learning to see.

And, finally, what is it all for? There is a common thread which connects Jenny's concerns and those of The Barnes Foundation with what artists have been doing since the cave people. *Really looking into* the objective makeup of a painting places us in touch with that spark of life which engendered the work at its creation. Sensitivity to those broad human qualities inherent in art is the stuff which has propelled civilizations forward from the dawn of time.

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PLATE 1

Renoir

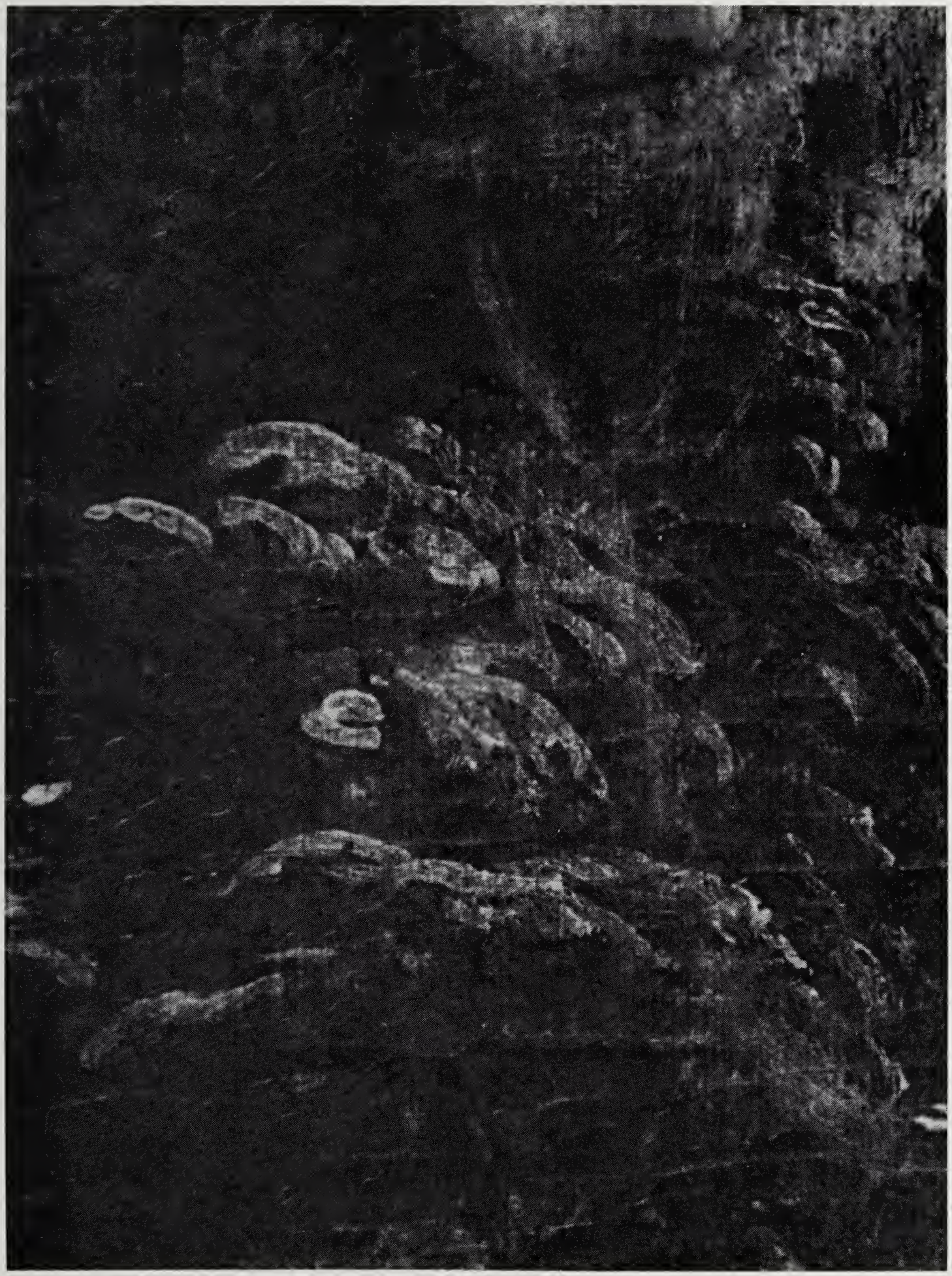
Girl in Yellow Hat
—Pages 13 ftn, 17 ftn, 114

PLATE 2

Veronese

Baptism
—Pages 5–6, 35

PLATE 3



Veronese

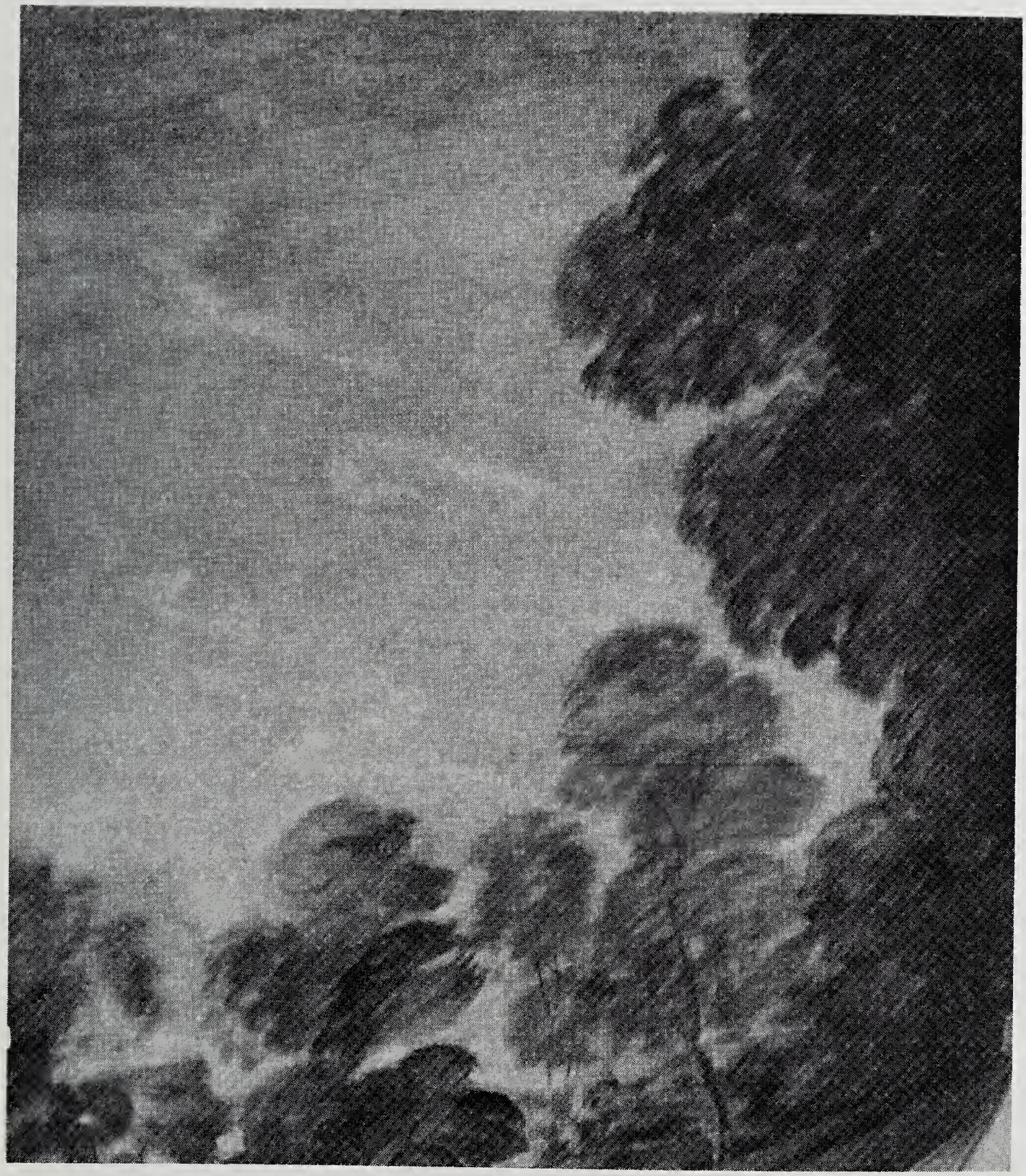
Detail from *Baptism* (Plate 2)
—Page 6

PLATE 4

Gainsborough

Perdita Robinson
(Reproduced by permission of the Trustees,
The Wallace Collection, London)—Pages 5, 7, 9 ftn

PLATE 5



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Bather [Gabrielle] Drying Herself
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PLATE 7

Renoir

Detail from *Bather [Gabrielle] Drying Herself* (Plate 6)
—Page 7

PLATE 8

Monet

Mme Monet Embroidering
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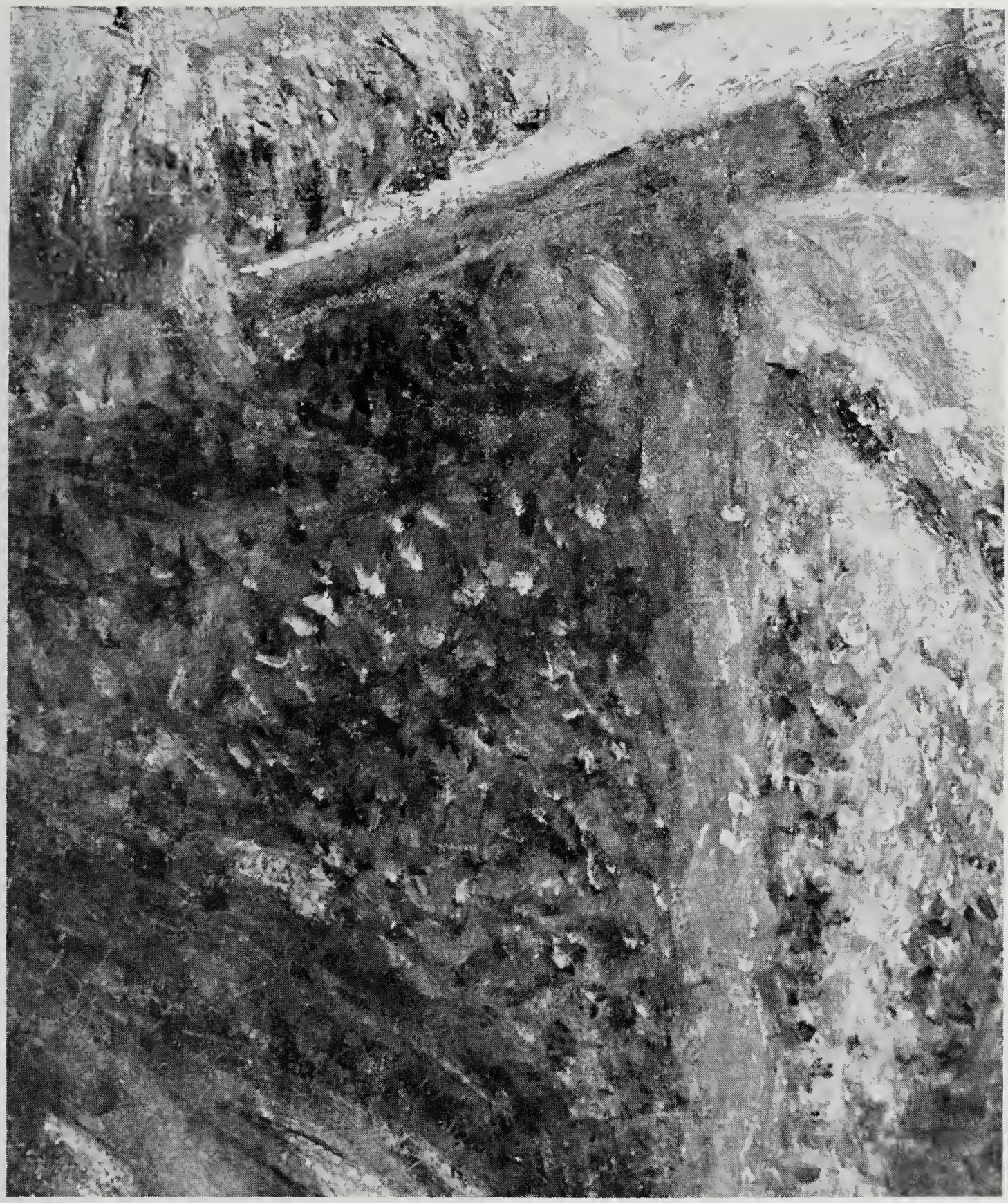

Monet

Detail from *Mme Monet Embroidering* (Plate 8)
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Still Life with Ginger Jar
—Page 13 ftn

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Woman Walking in the Garden
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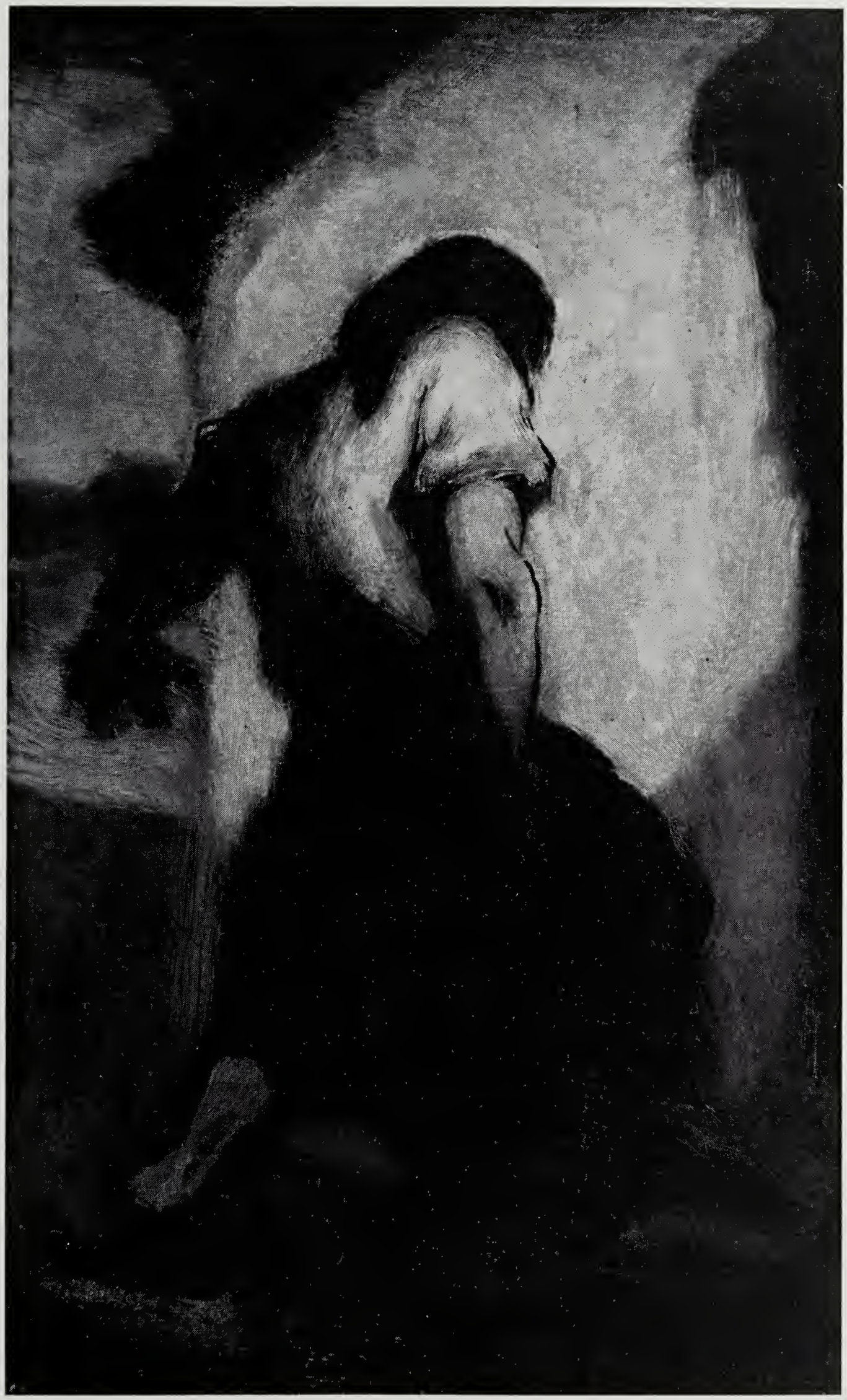

Daumier

Water Carrier
—Pages 23, 25, 37 ftn, 52

Portion of Wall Display
at The Barnes Foundation

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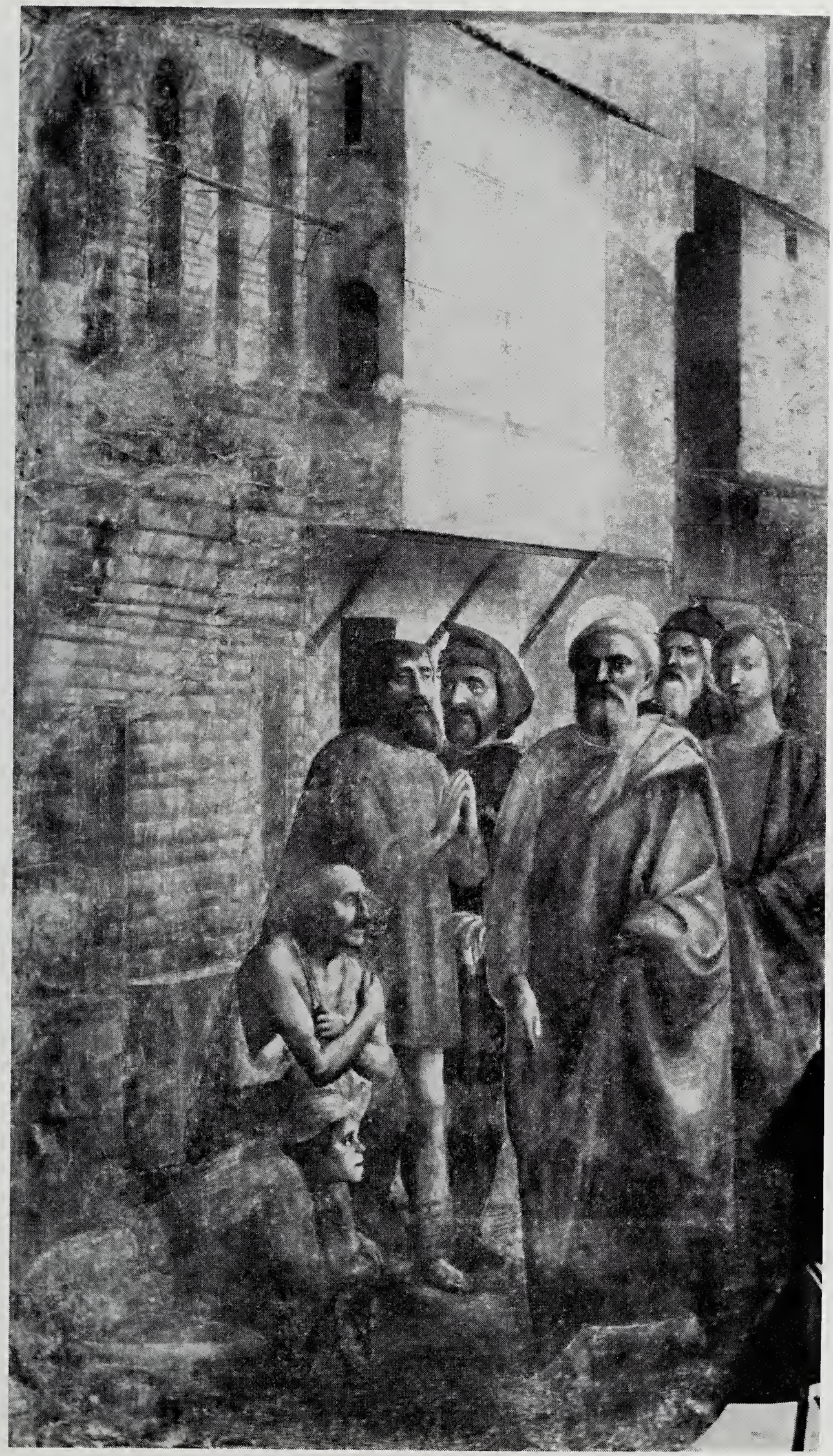
—Pages 112–113



Masaccio

S. Pietro con la sua ombra risana ql'infermi
(St. Peter with his Shadow Heals the Cripple)
(Capella Brancacci—Chiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence—Photograph: Alinari, Florence)—Page 17 ftn

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Lamentation
(Present ownership unknown)—Page 39 ftn

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St. Francis Blessing the Birds
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—Photograph: Alinari, Florence)—Pages 39 ftn, 50

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Lo Sposalizio della Vergine
(The Marriage of the Virgin)
(Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano
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Ghirlandaio *Francesco Sassetti and his Son Teodoro*
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)—Pages 17 ftn, 39 ftn

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Thatches in the Sunshine— Reminiscence of the North
—Pages 105, 105 ftn, 116

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Degas

Three Ballet Dancers
—Page 23

PLATE 23

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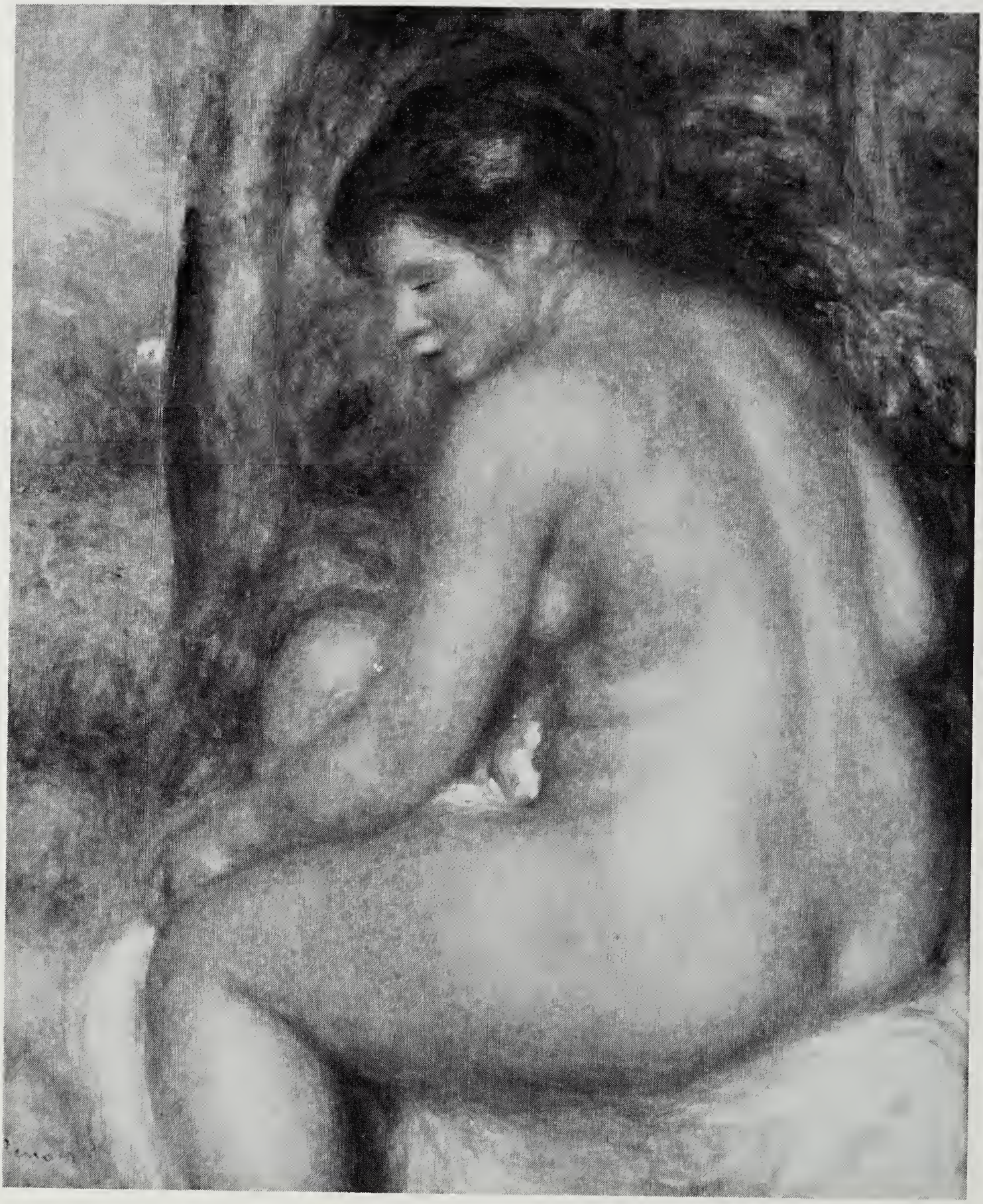

Renoir

Nude and Tree
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Renoir

Washerwoman and Baby
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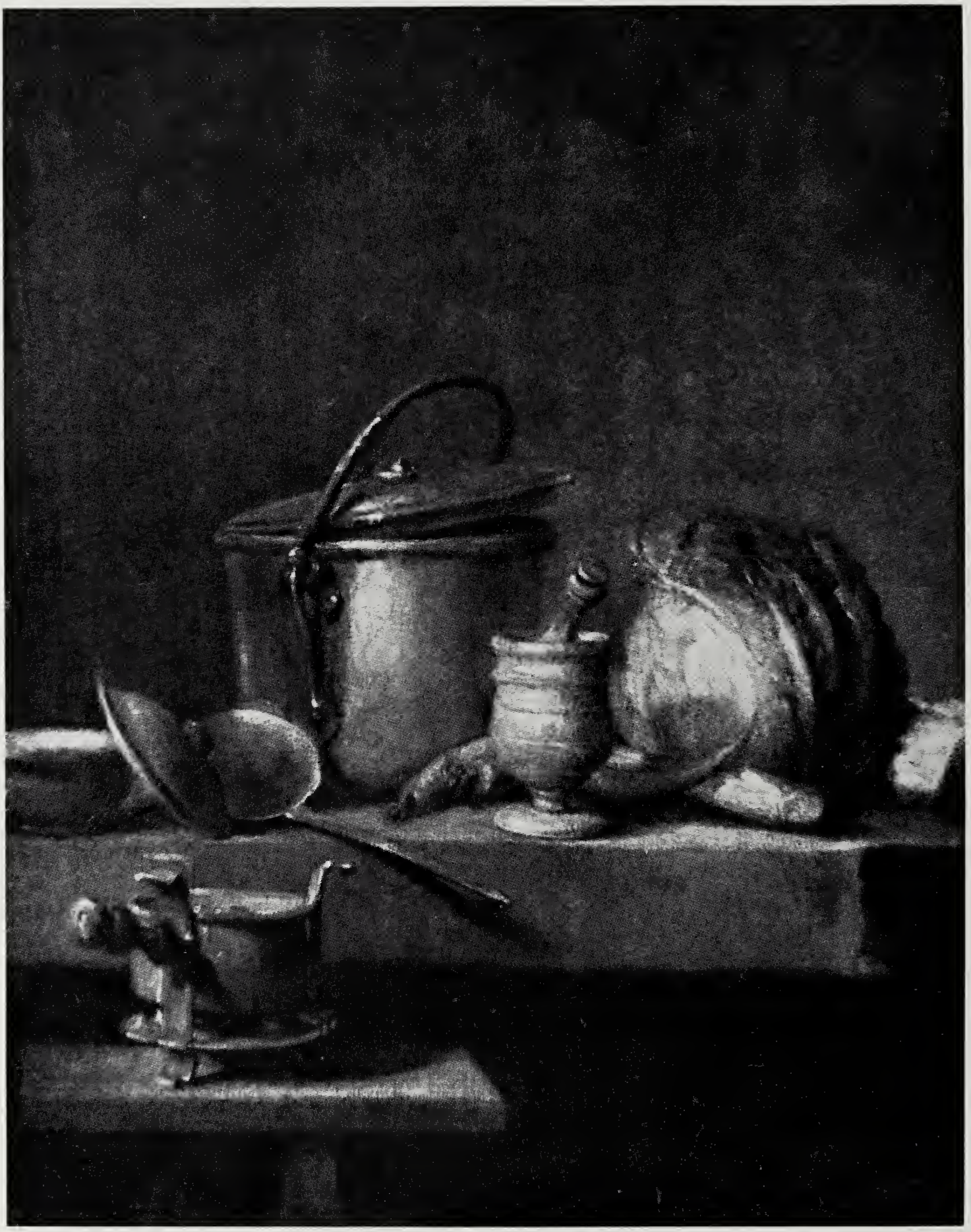

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Wall Display
at The Barnes Foundation

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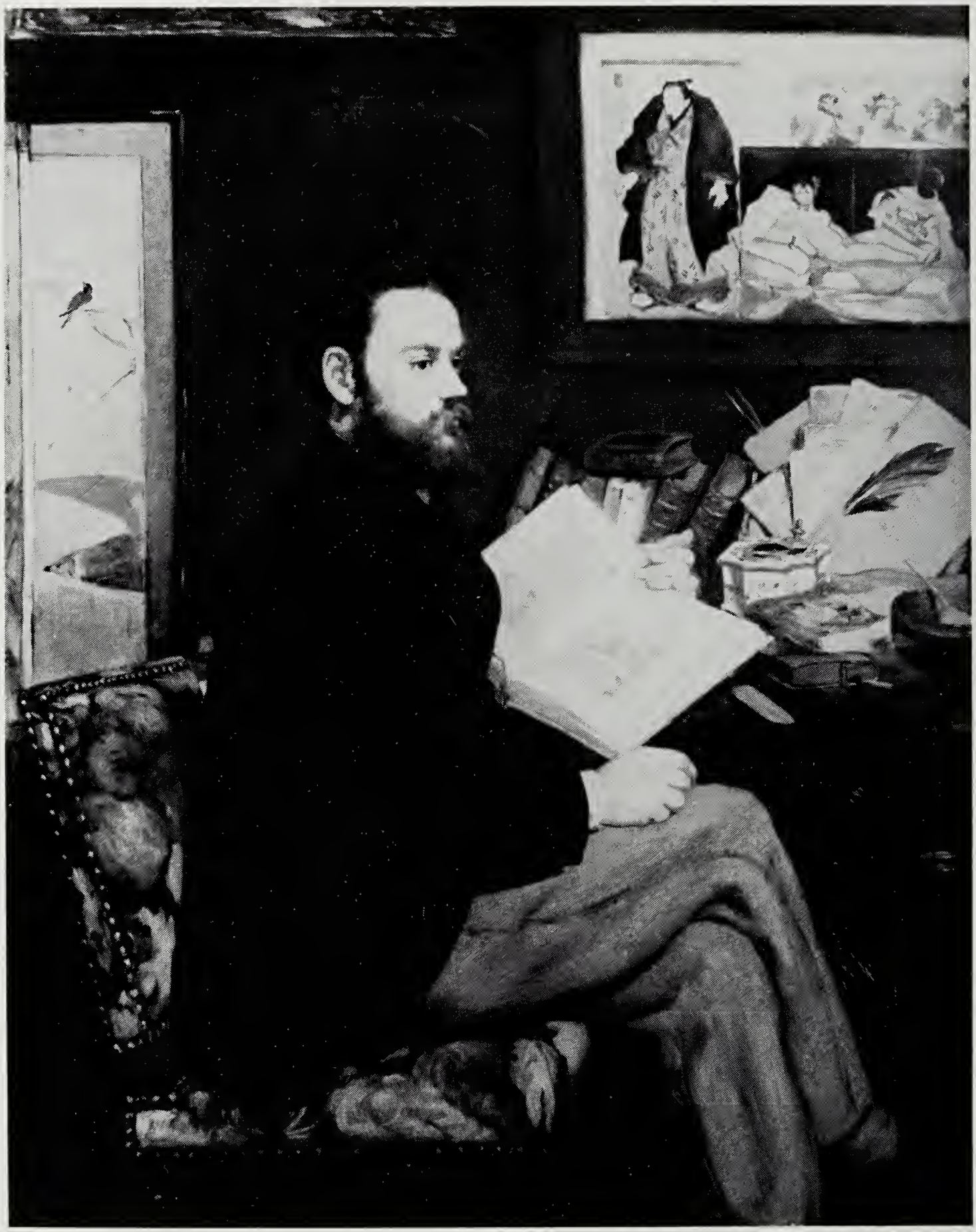
PLATE 30



Manet

Portrait of Emile Zola
(Musée d'Orsay—Jeu de Paume
—Photograph: Musées Nationaux)—Page 122

PLATE 31

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Woman [Mme Cézanne] in Green Hat
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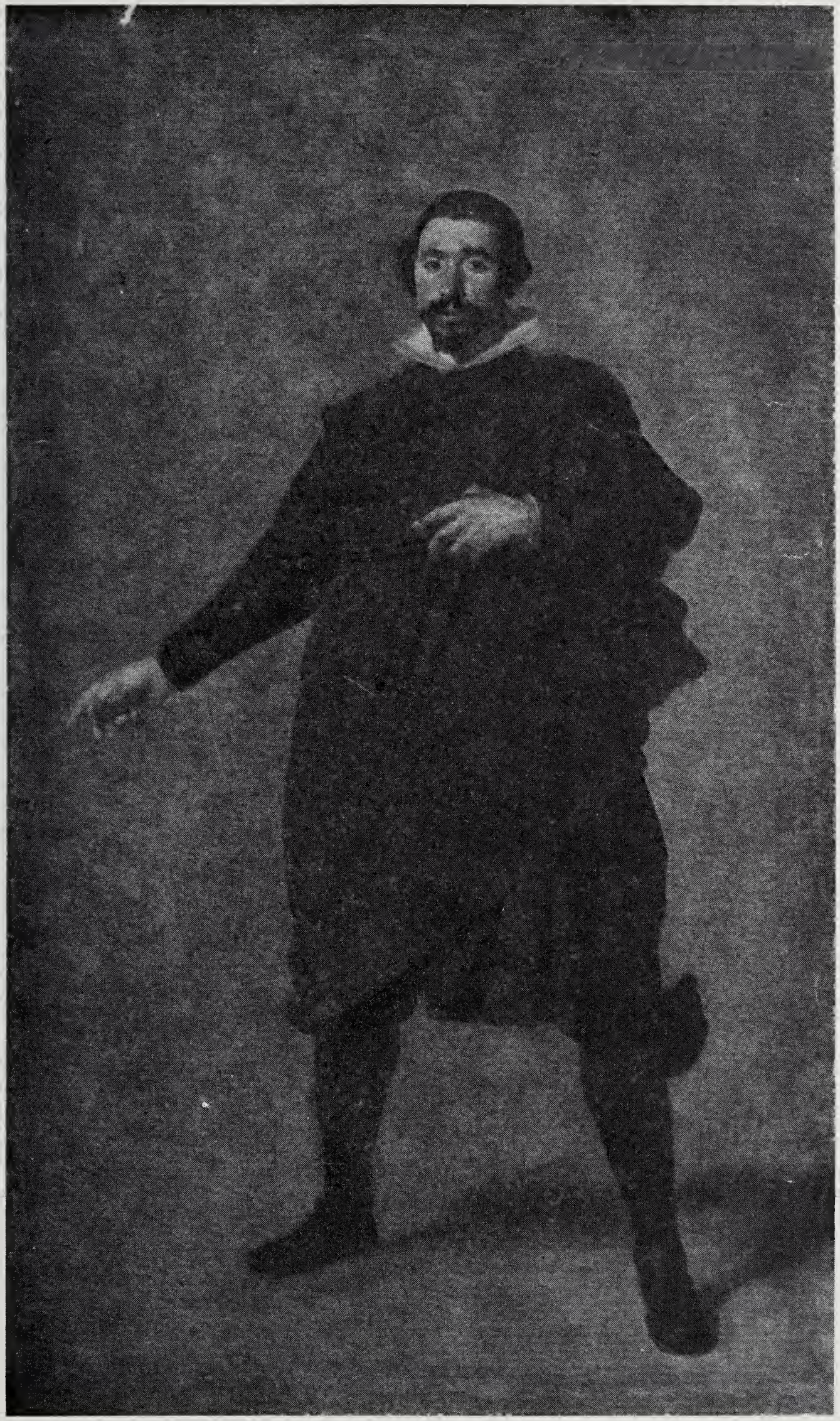

Velásquez

Portrait of a Buffoon of Philip IV
(Copyright © Museo del Prado, Madrid)—Page 39 ftn

Yves Tanguy

Mama, Papa is Wounded, 1927
(Oil on canvas, 36¼ × 28¾″—
Collection, the Museum of Modern Art, New York)—Page 87

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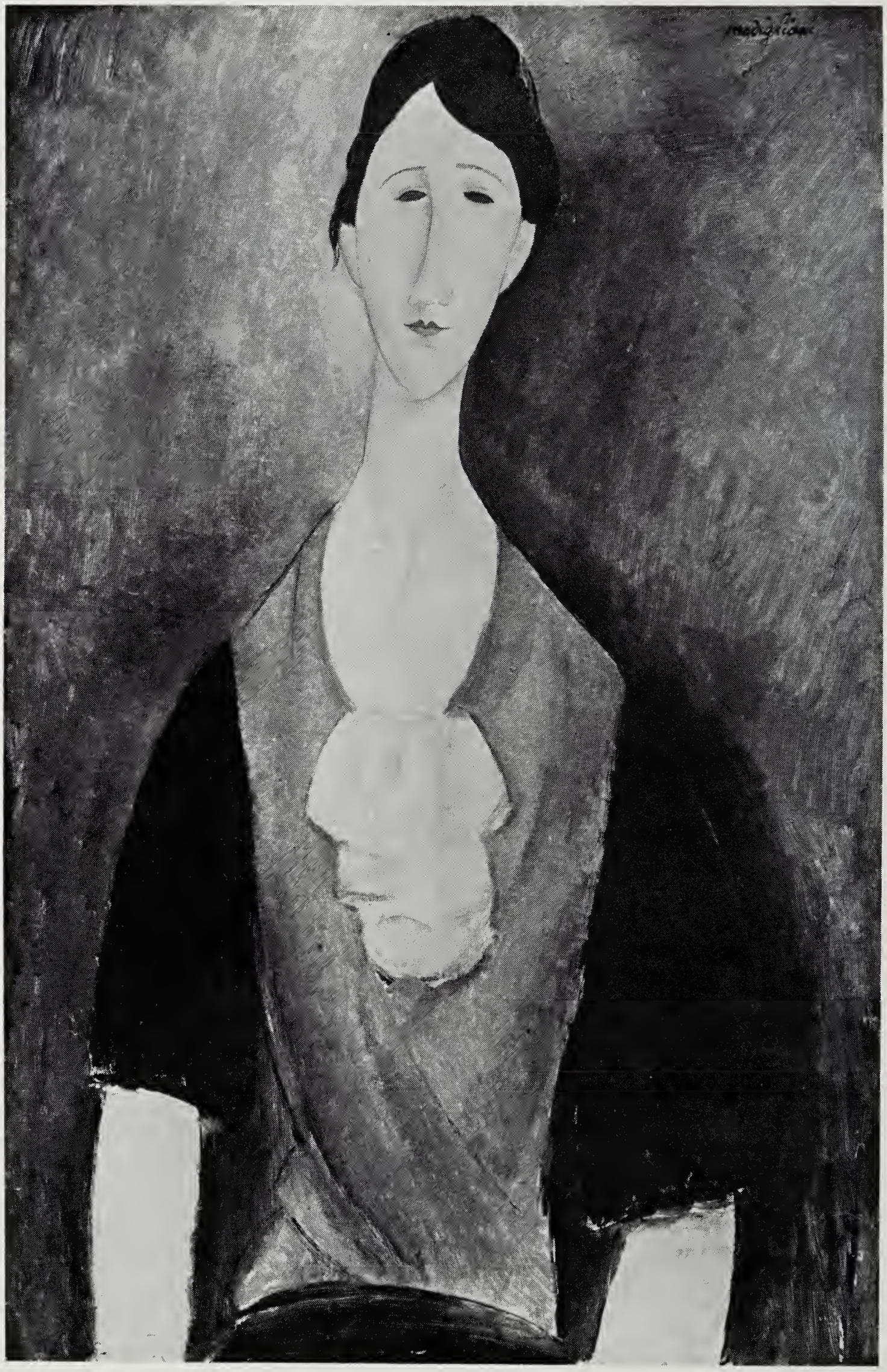
Irish—IX Century

Portrait of St. Mark or St. Luke
(from *The Book of Kells*—Trinity College, Dublin)—Page 37 ftn



Modigliani

Portrait of a Woman
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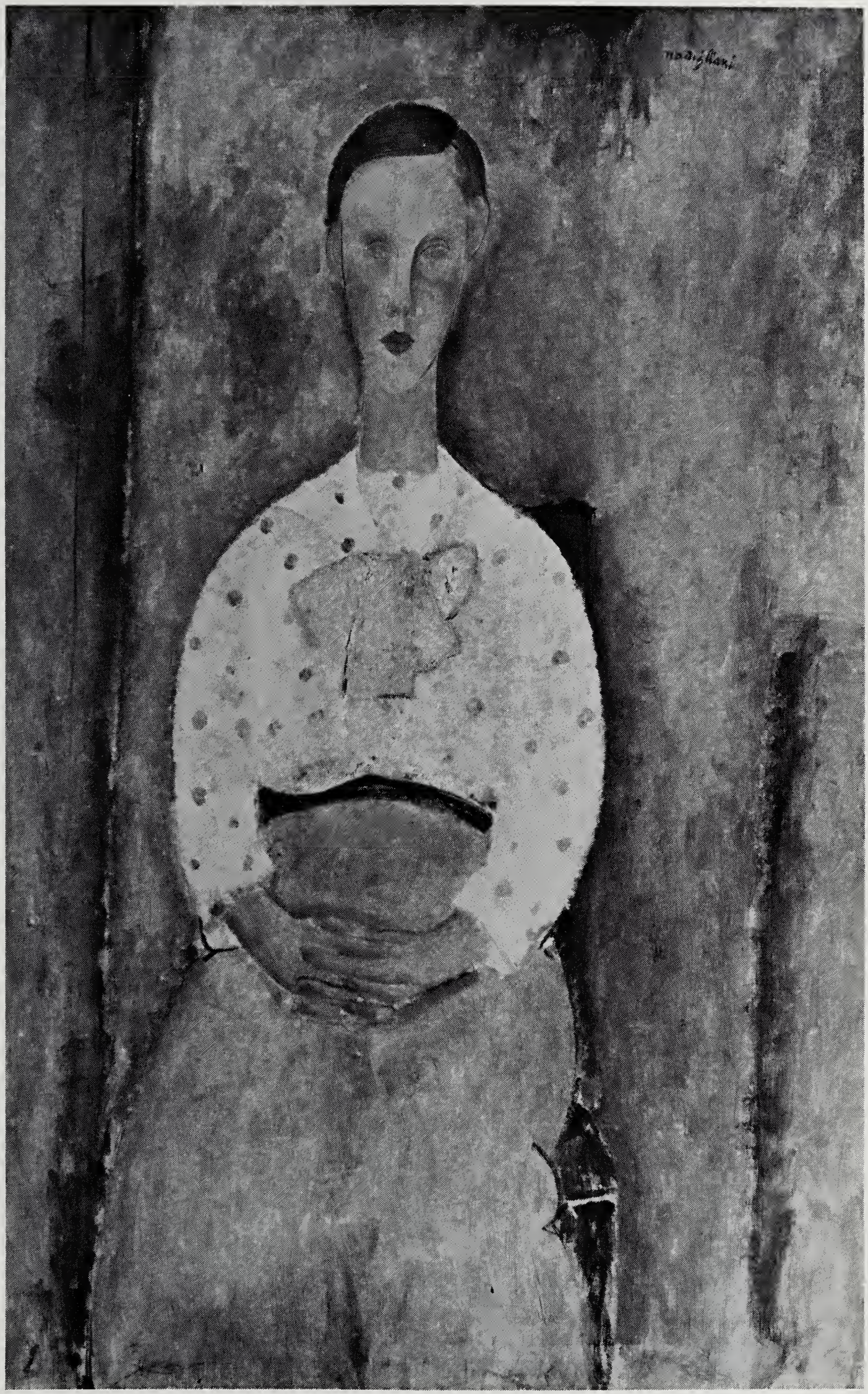

Modigliani

Girl in Sunday Clothes
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Figure Seated on High Stool
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—Page 18 ftn

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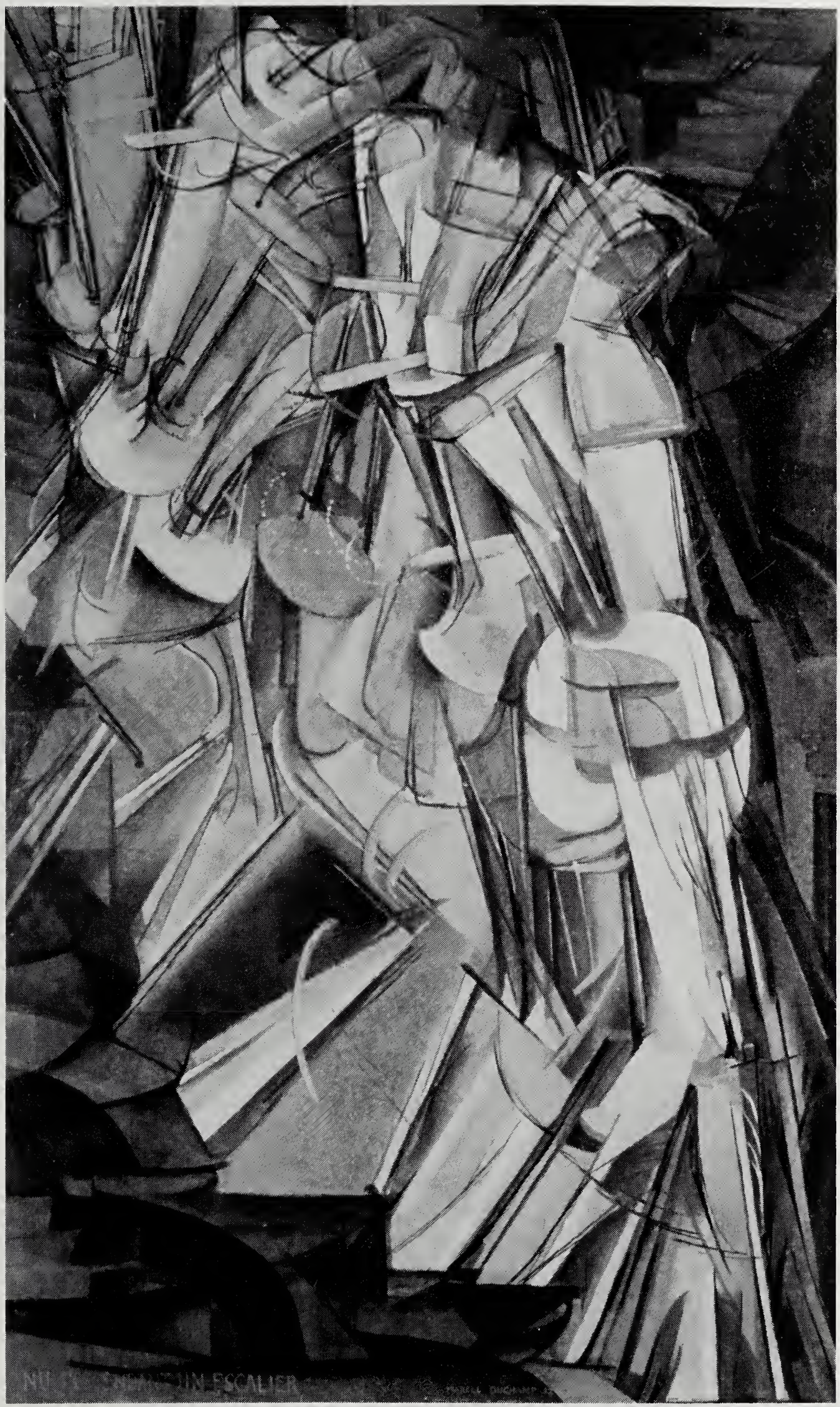
Rocks and Trees
—Page 38

Photographer:
Eliot Elisofon

Marcel Duchamp walking down stairs;
Life 4/28/52
(Life Magazine © 1952 Time, Inc.)—Page 46 ftn



Marcel Duchamp

Nude Descending a Staircase
(Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection—Photographed by The Philadelphia Museum of Art)—Page 46 ftn

Jackson Pollock *Cathedral*
(Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis—1950.87)—Page 103

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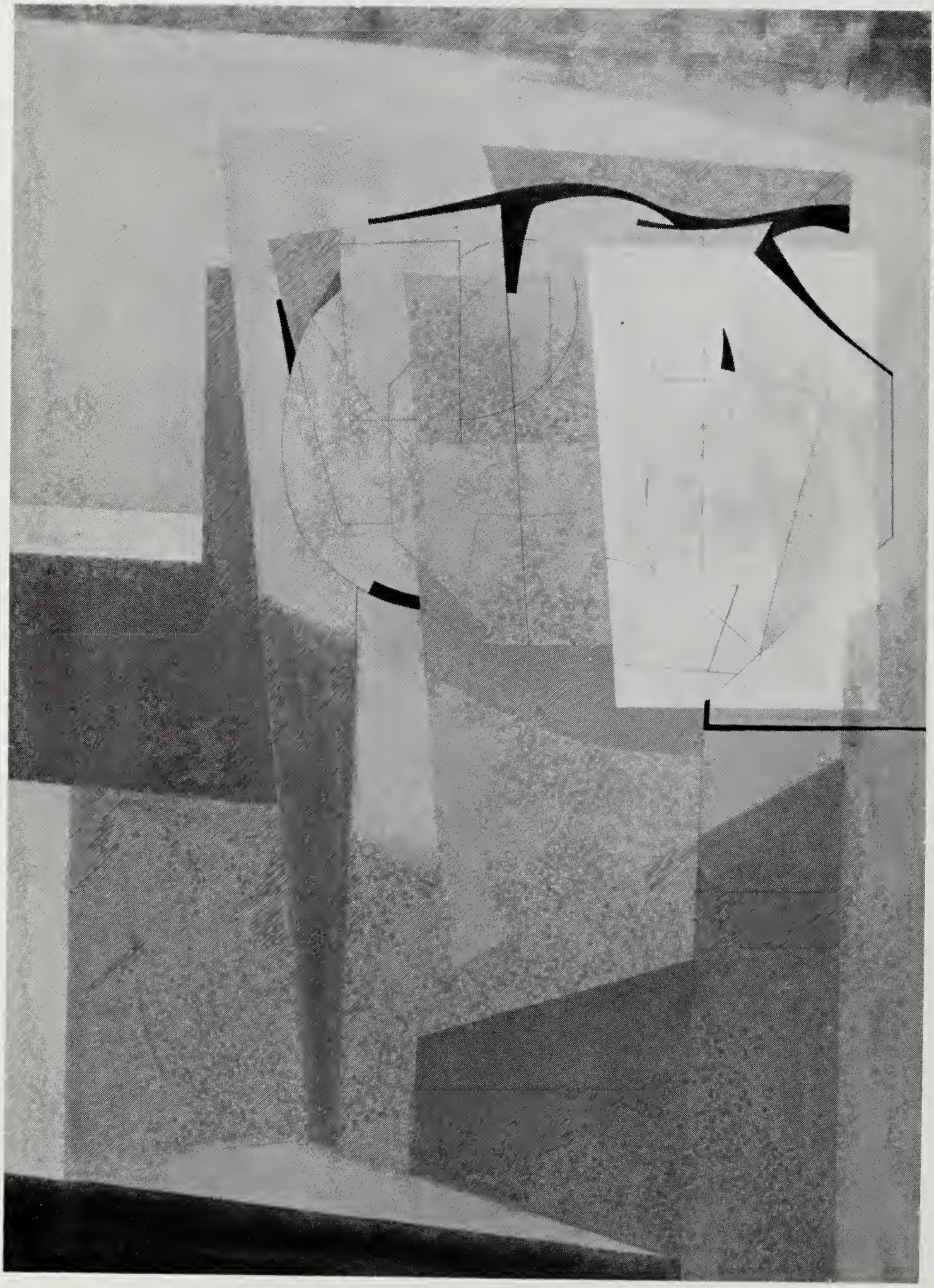
Karel Appel *Two Heads*; 1953
(Collection, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York)—Page 103

PLATE 46



Ben Nicholson

June 4-52 (Tableform)
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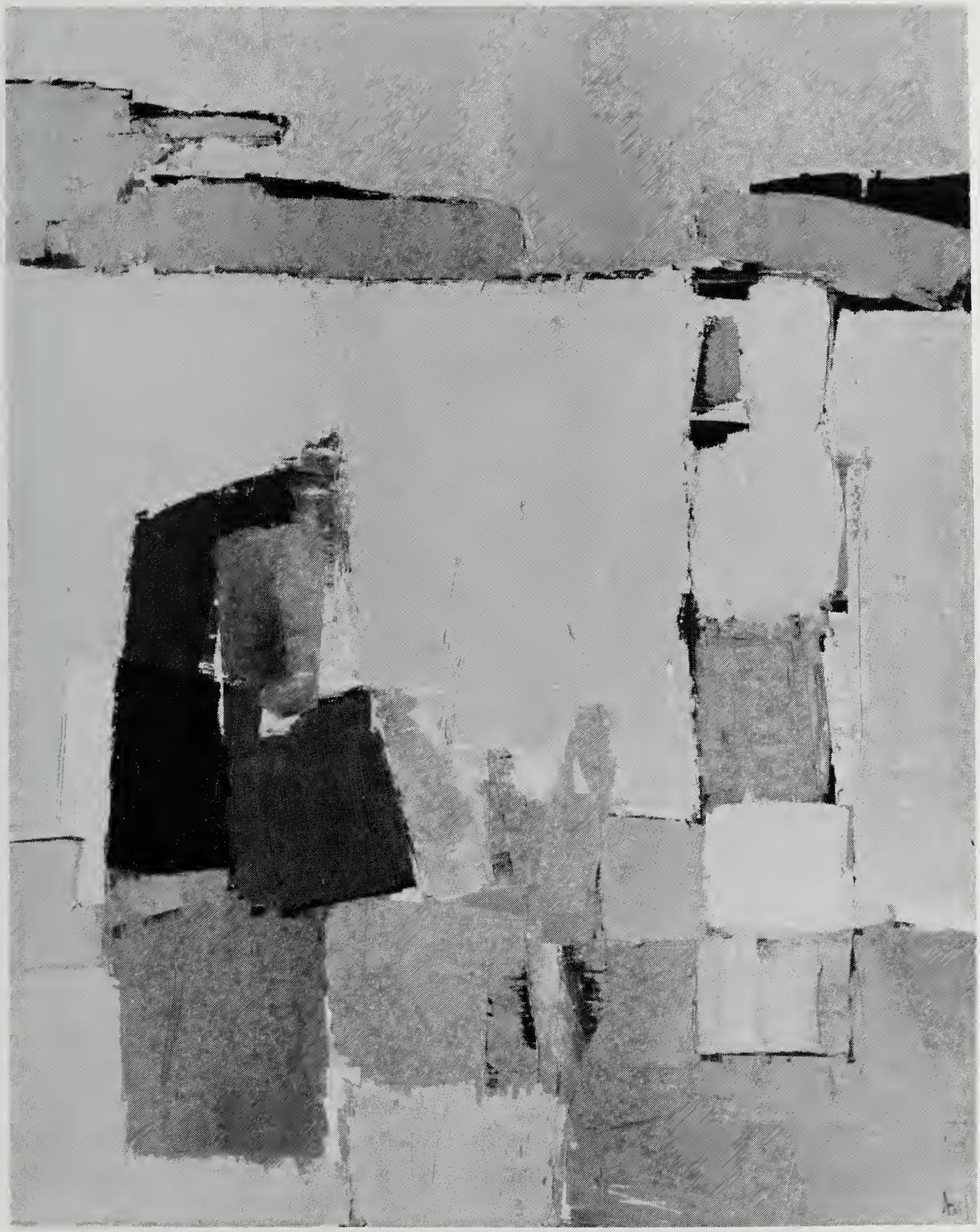

Nicolas de Staël

Figures au bord de la mer
(Figures at the Seashore)
(Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf)
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Alisa Bauman

Raggedy Ann and Andy
(Collection, the artist's)—Pages 90–91

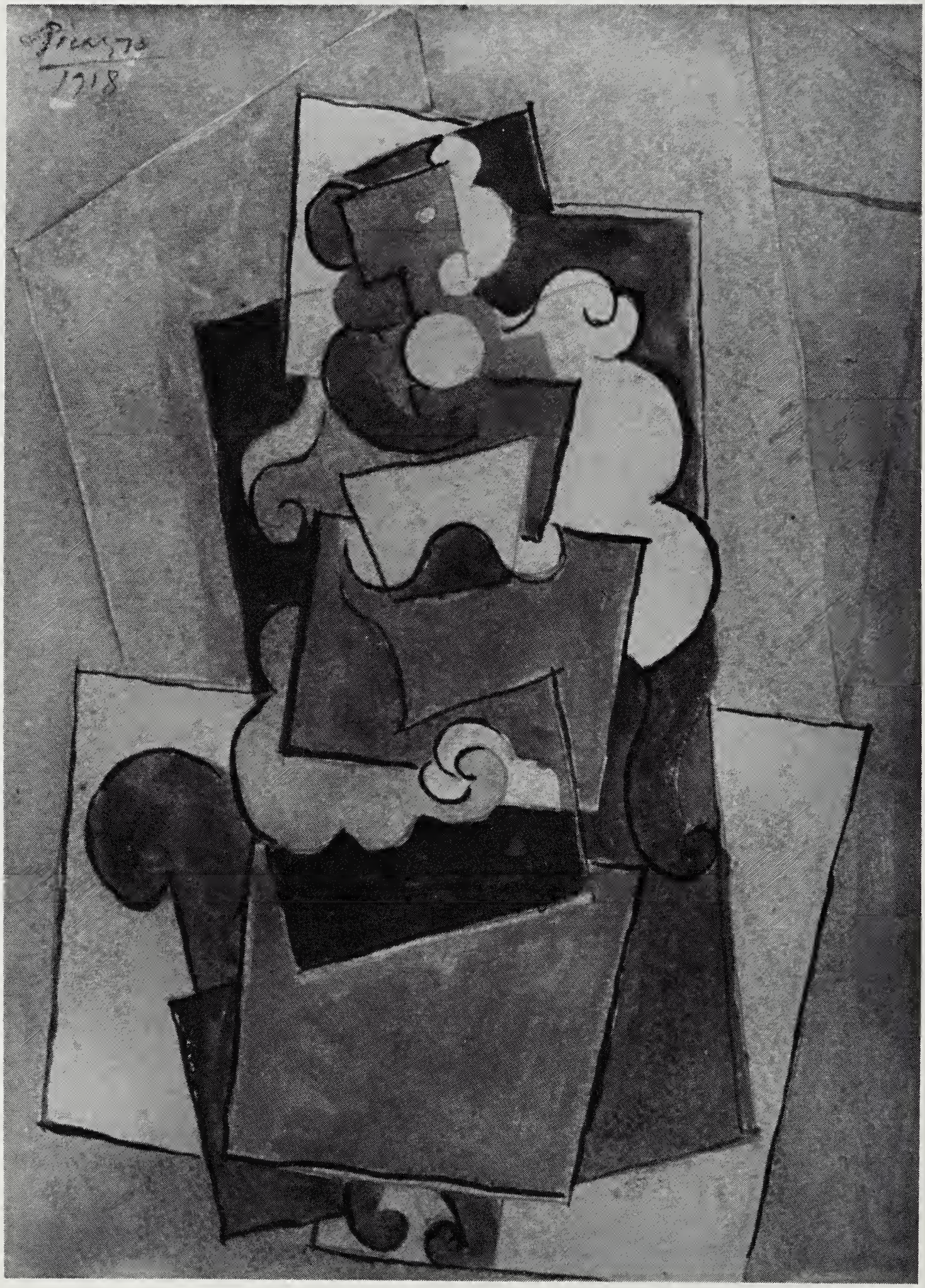
PLATE 49

Picasso

Portrait of Hélène Parmelin

(© S.P.A.D.E.M., Paris/V.A.G.A., New York, 1983)—Pages 90, 91

PLATE 50



Picasso

Angles and Curves
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Mother and Child
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Wall Display
at The Barnes Foundation

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PLATE 53

Renoir

The Artist's Family
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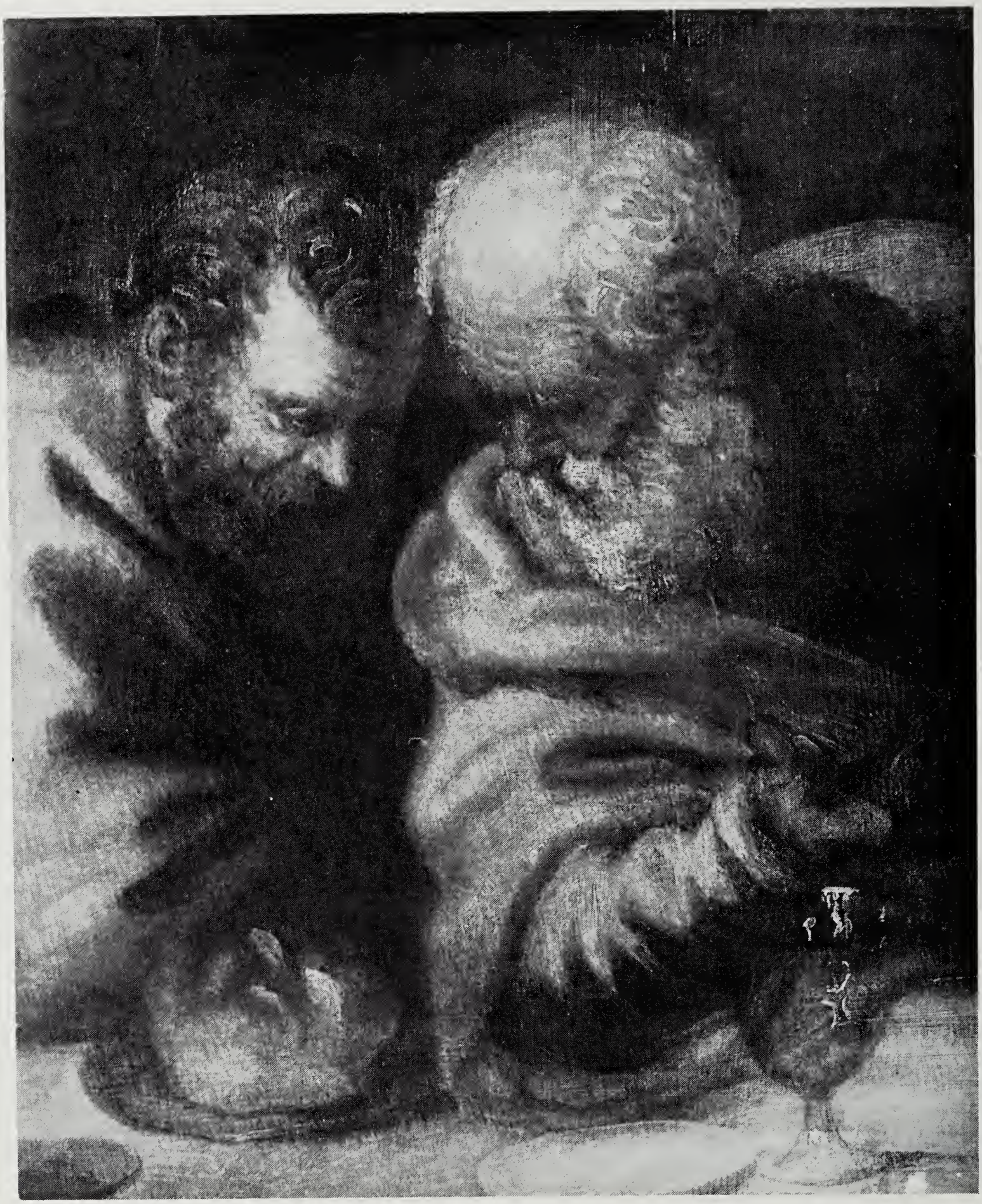
PLATE 54



Tintoretto

Two Prophets
—Page 110

PLATE 55

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Two Heads
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Portion of Wall Display
at The Barnes Foundation

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Portion of Wall Display
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Wall Display
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Room XII (North Wall)
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Wall Display
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PLATE 61

Nôh Wan

Zero Plus Minus
(Collection, Nonnas Ovnow,
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Christ and the Woman of Samaria
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Tintoretto

Detail from *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (Plate 62)
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The Holy Family
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Idyl
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Watteau

Detail from *Idyl* (Plate 66)
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Renoir

Cup of Chocolate
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Renoir

Bust of Nude
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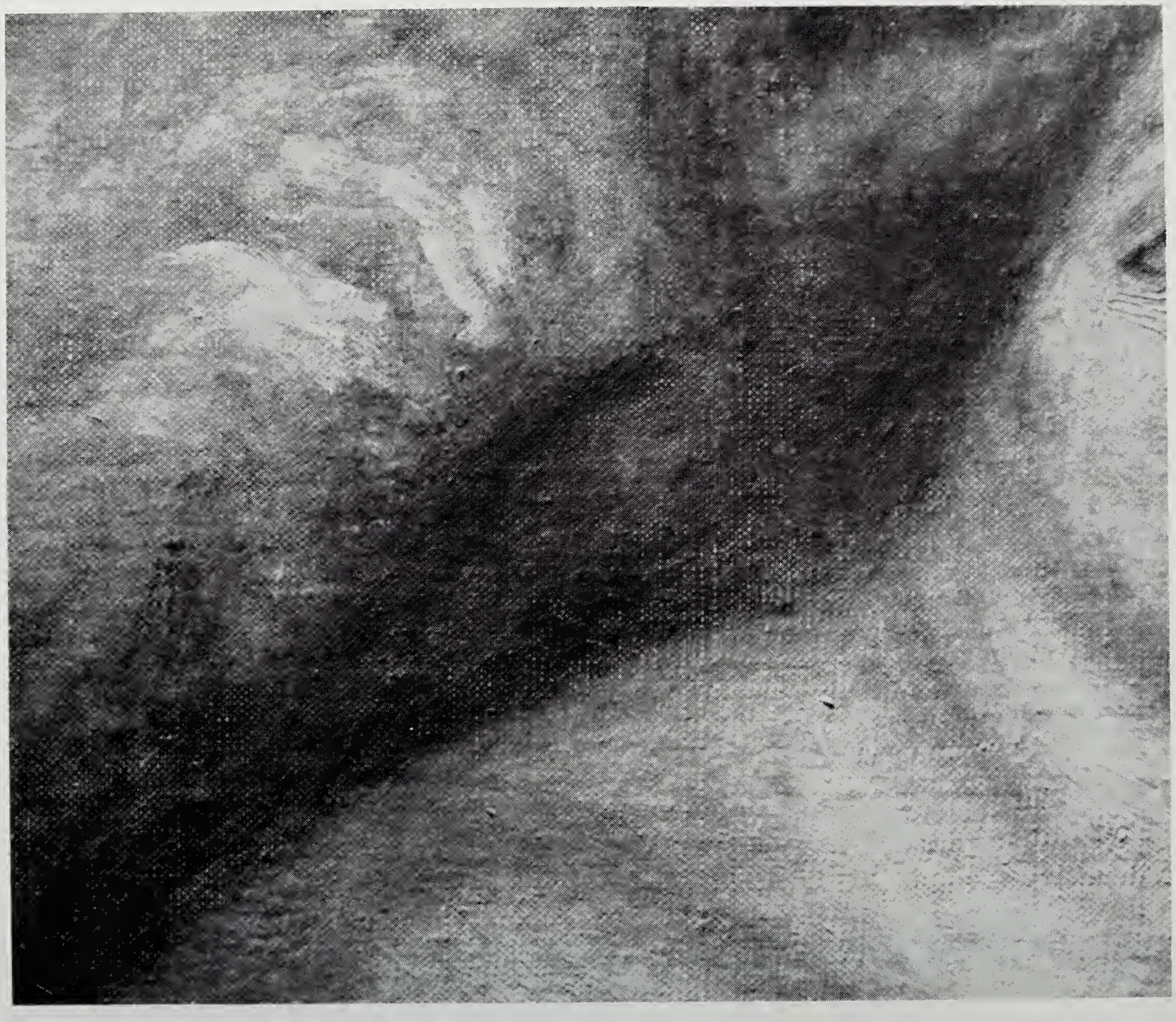
Renoir

Detail from *Bust of Nude* (Plate 69)
—Page 7



Renoir

Detail from *Bust of Nude* (Plate 69)
—Page 7

Manet

Lady with Fans—Nina de Callias
(Musée d'Orsay—Jeu de Paume—Photograph: Musées Nationaux)—Page 122

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Girl in Landscape
—Page 8

Renoir

Bathing Group
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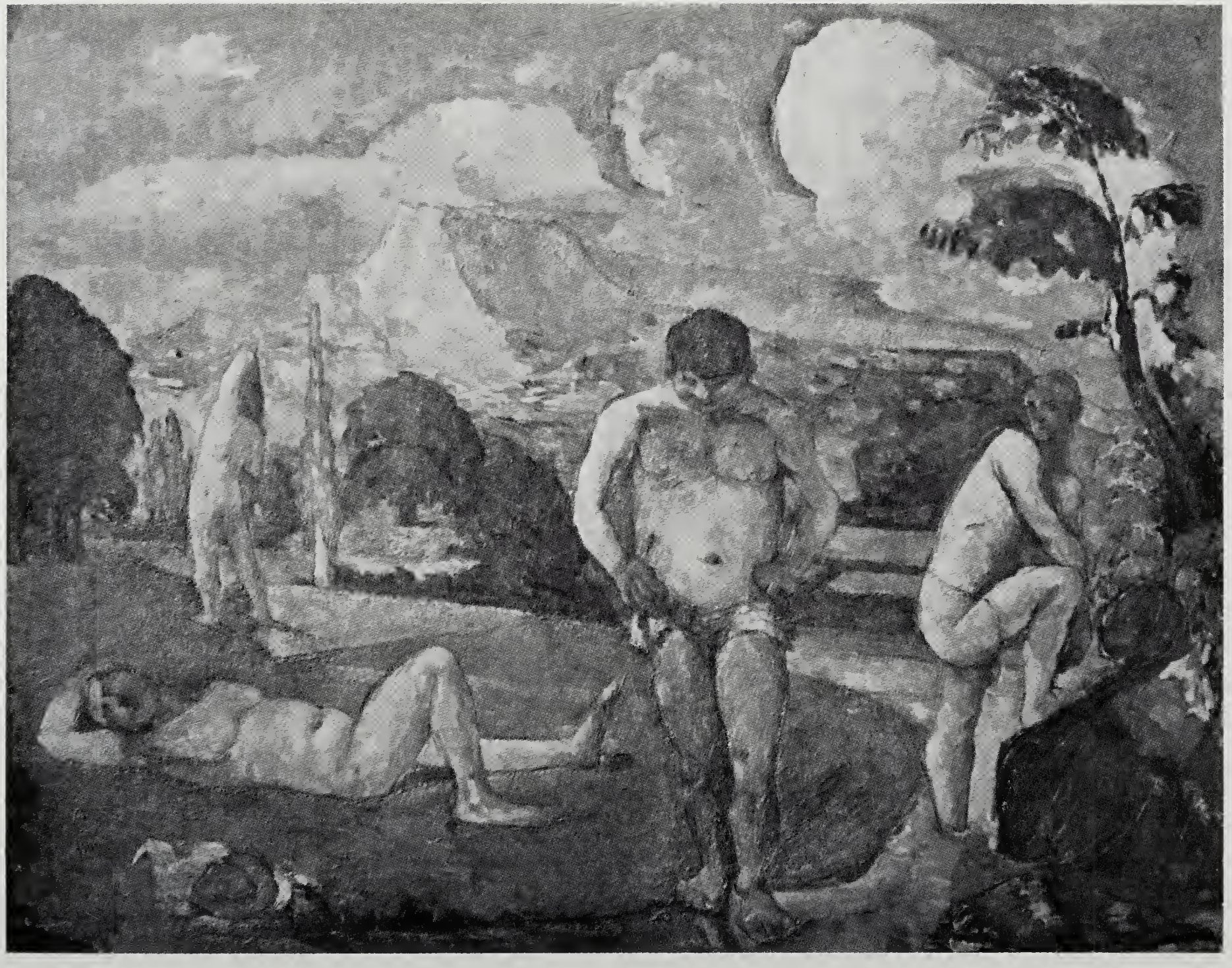

Cézanne

Bathers at Rest
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Winslow Homer

Canoe in Rapids
(Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University—Purchase: Louise E. Bettens Fund)—Pages 21 ftn, 37 ftn

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Nudes in Landscape
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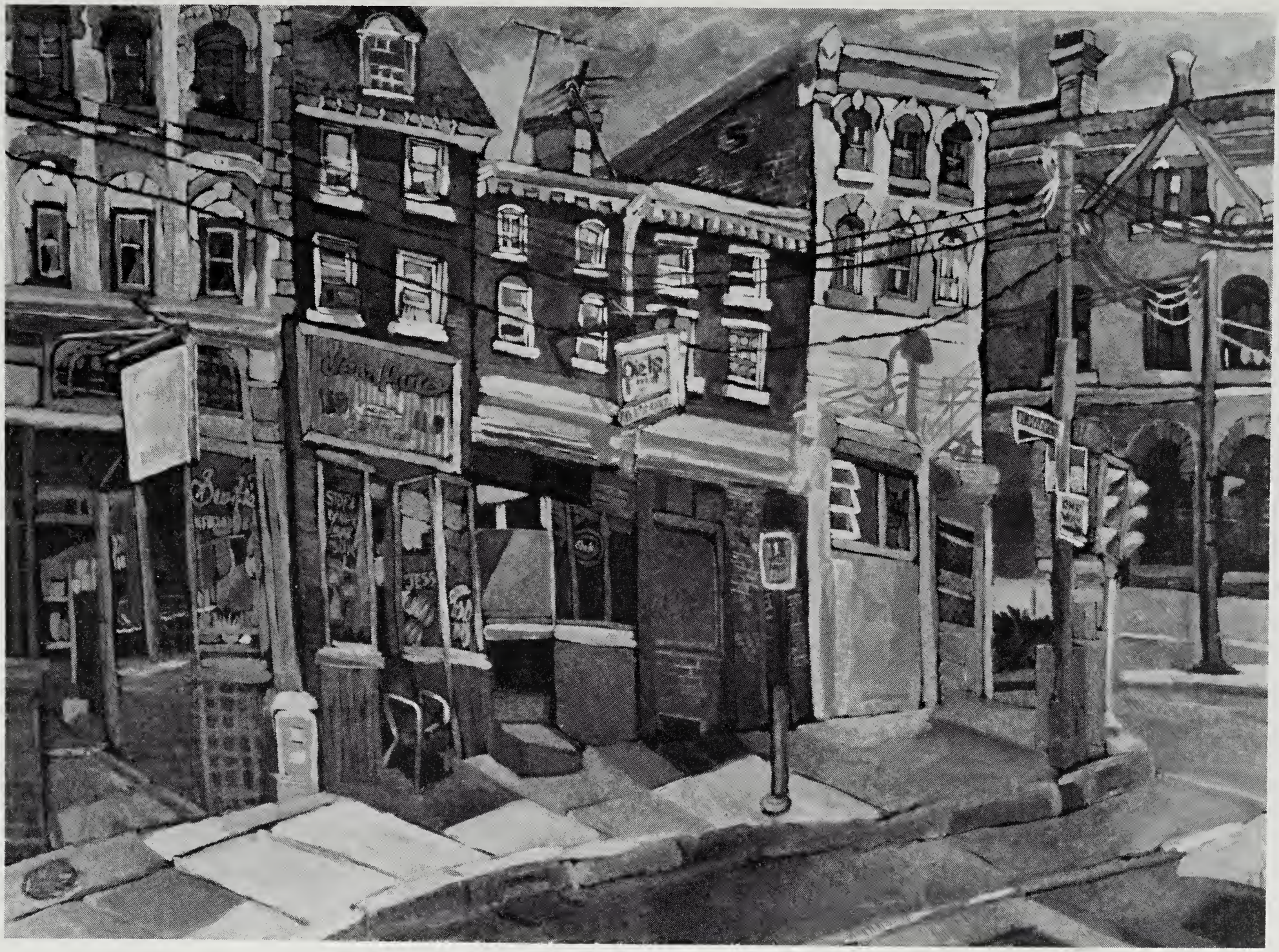

Marilyn Bauman

Beautiful Downtown Wilmington
(Collection, the artist's)—Page 103 ftn

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Men Bathing
—Pages 11, 52

Luigi Lucioni

Still Life
(Present ownership unknown)—Pages 9–10, 17 ftn

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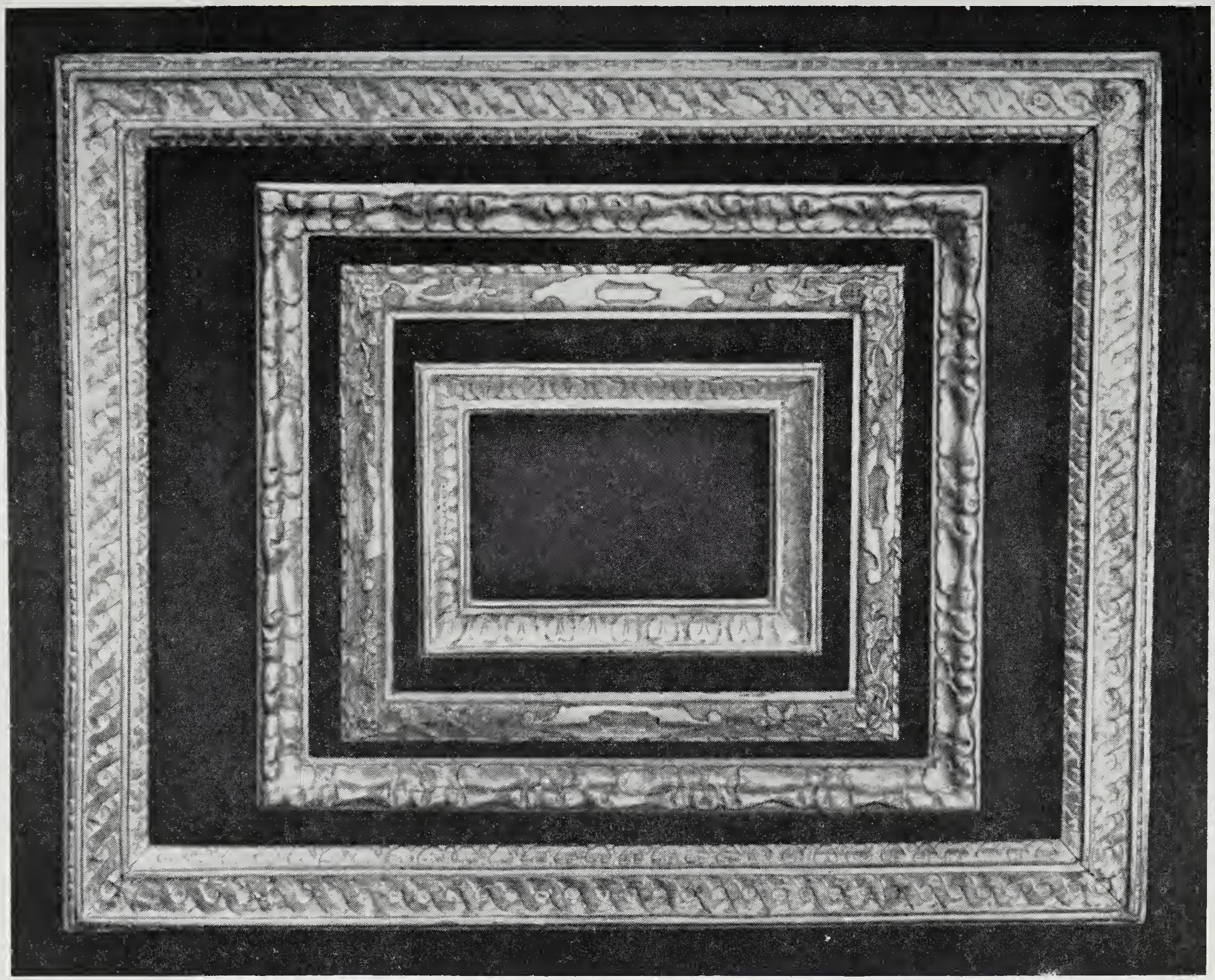
Charles Prendergast

Annunciation
(Privately owned)—Page 11 ftn

Charles Prendergast

Decorated Blanket Chest
(Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)—Page 11 ftn



Charles Prendergast

Carved gold-leaved frames
—Pages 11 ftn, 116 ftn

Charles Prendergast

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Bullfight
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Landscape with Ducks
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Corot

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Henri Rousseau

People in Sunday Clothes
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Renoir

Guernsey
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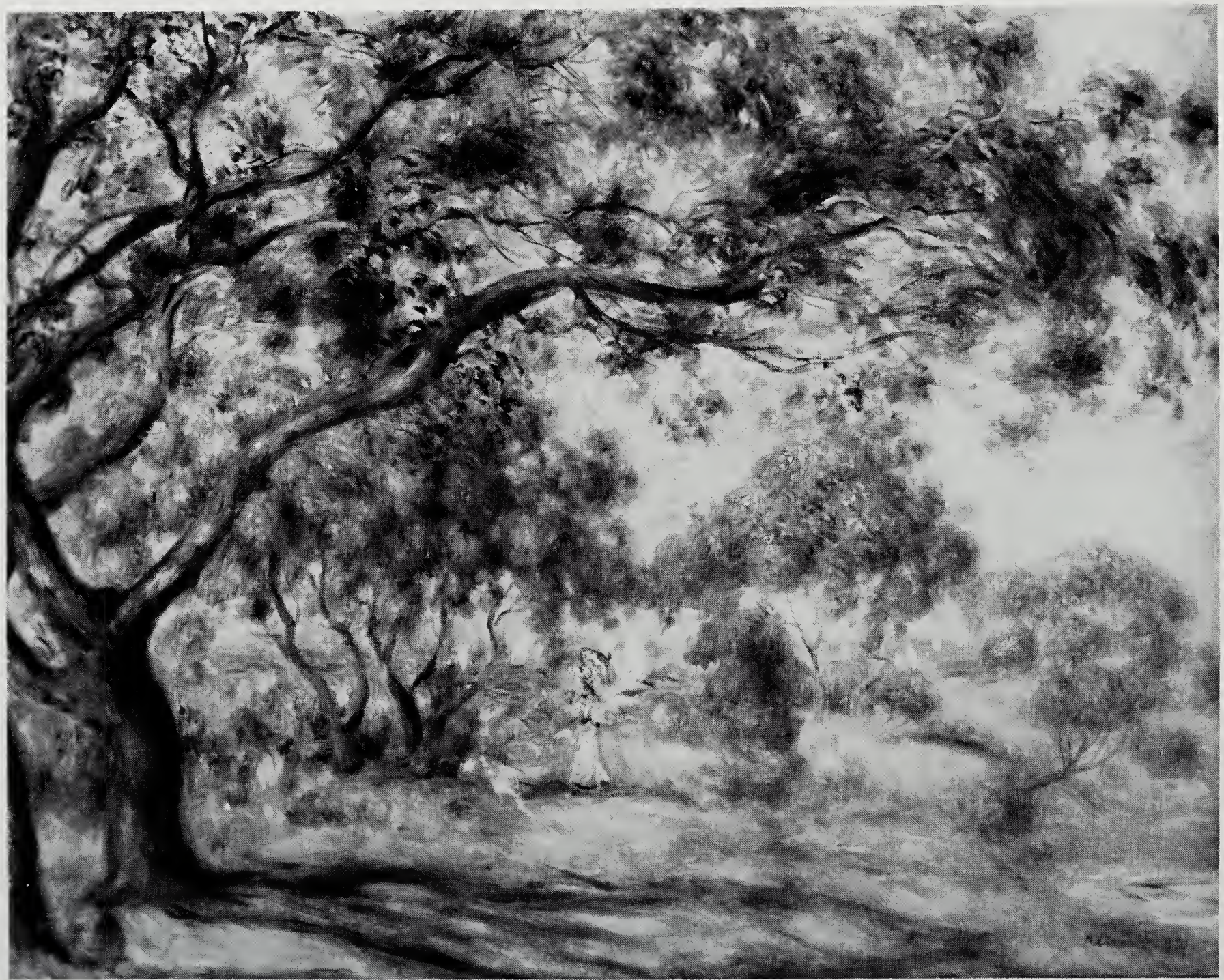

Renoir

Noirmoutier
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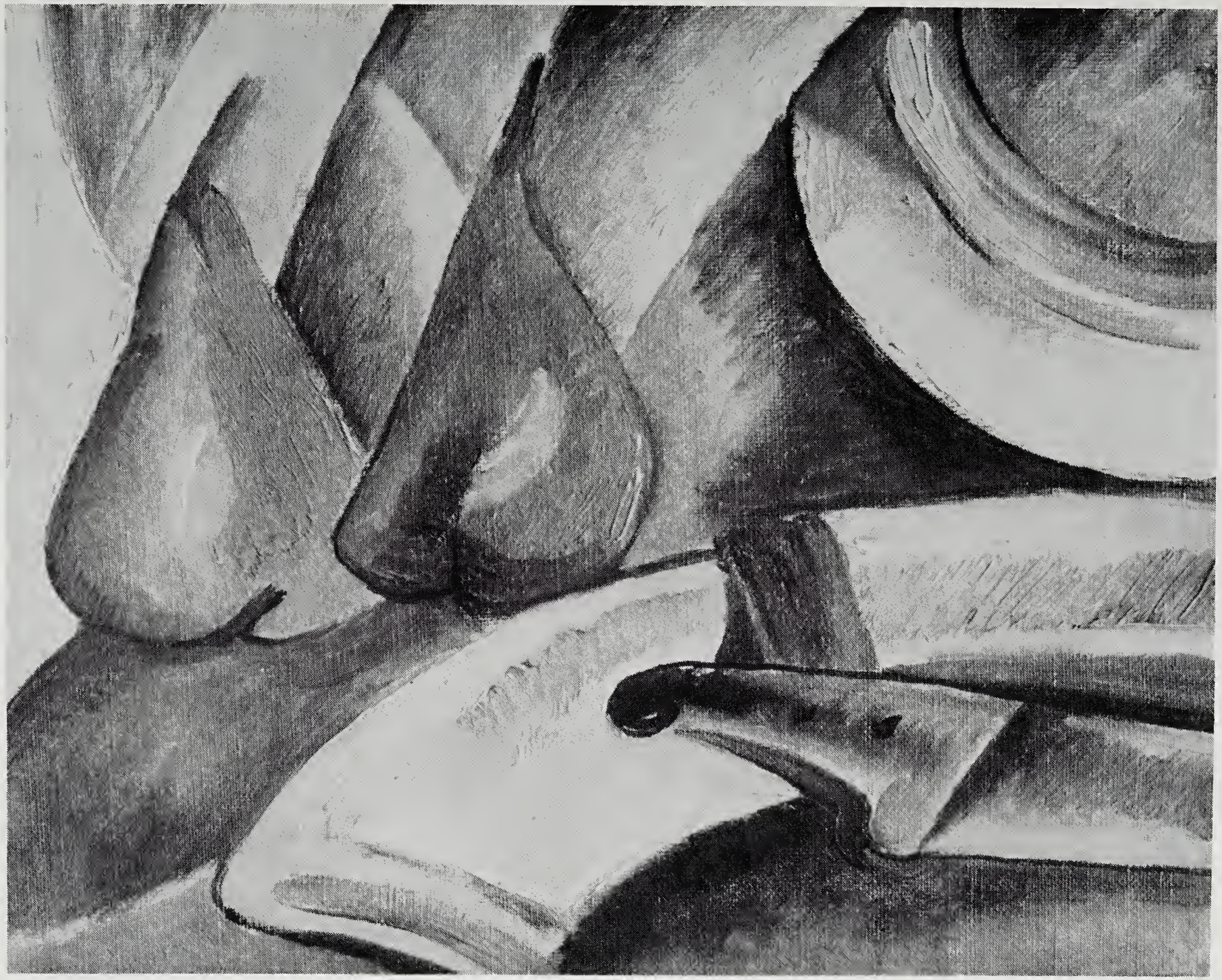
Chinese Casket
—Page 99

Claude Lorrain

Venice
—Page 14 ftn



Braque

Still Life with Pears
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Pastoral Landscape
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Valley of the Arc
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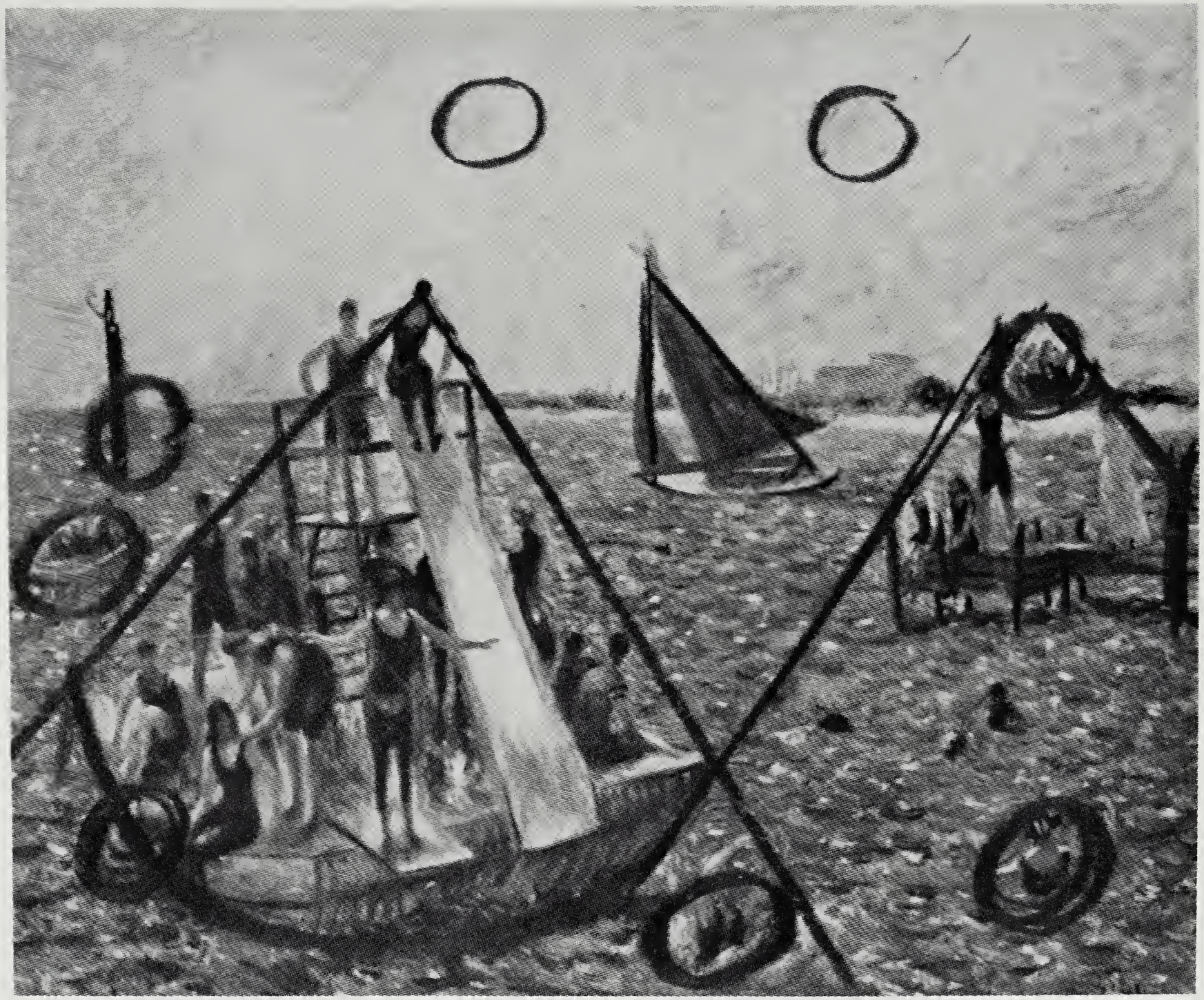

Glackens

Belport (Compositional Diagram)
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FOLD-OUT

PLATE 104

Glackens

Belport
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PLATE 103

Glackens

Belport (Altered photograph of Fold-out Plate 104)
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PLATE 104

Glackens

Belport
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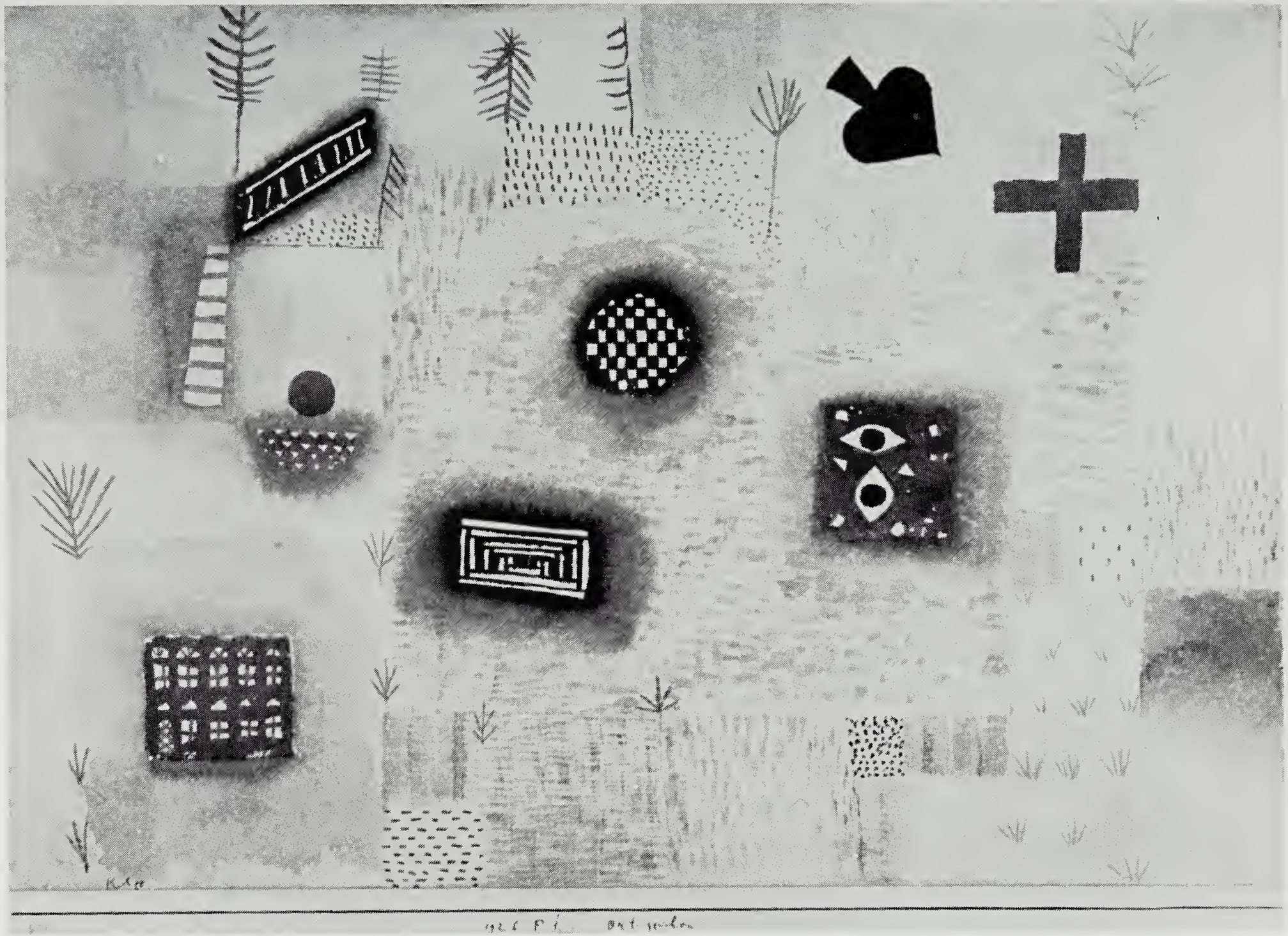
PLATE 103



Klee

Garden Signs
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Path in the Woods
(Collection of Mrs. Henry Pearlman, New York)—Page 38

Byzantine Mosaic, VI Century

Queen Theodora and her Retinue
(San Vitale, Ravenna—Photograph: Alinari, Florence)—Page 48

French Tapestry *c* 1500
Atelier des bords de la Loire
(Workshop of the Loire Region)

La Vie Seigneuriale—La Promenade
(Court Life—The Promenade)
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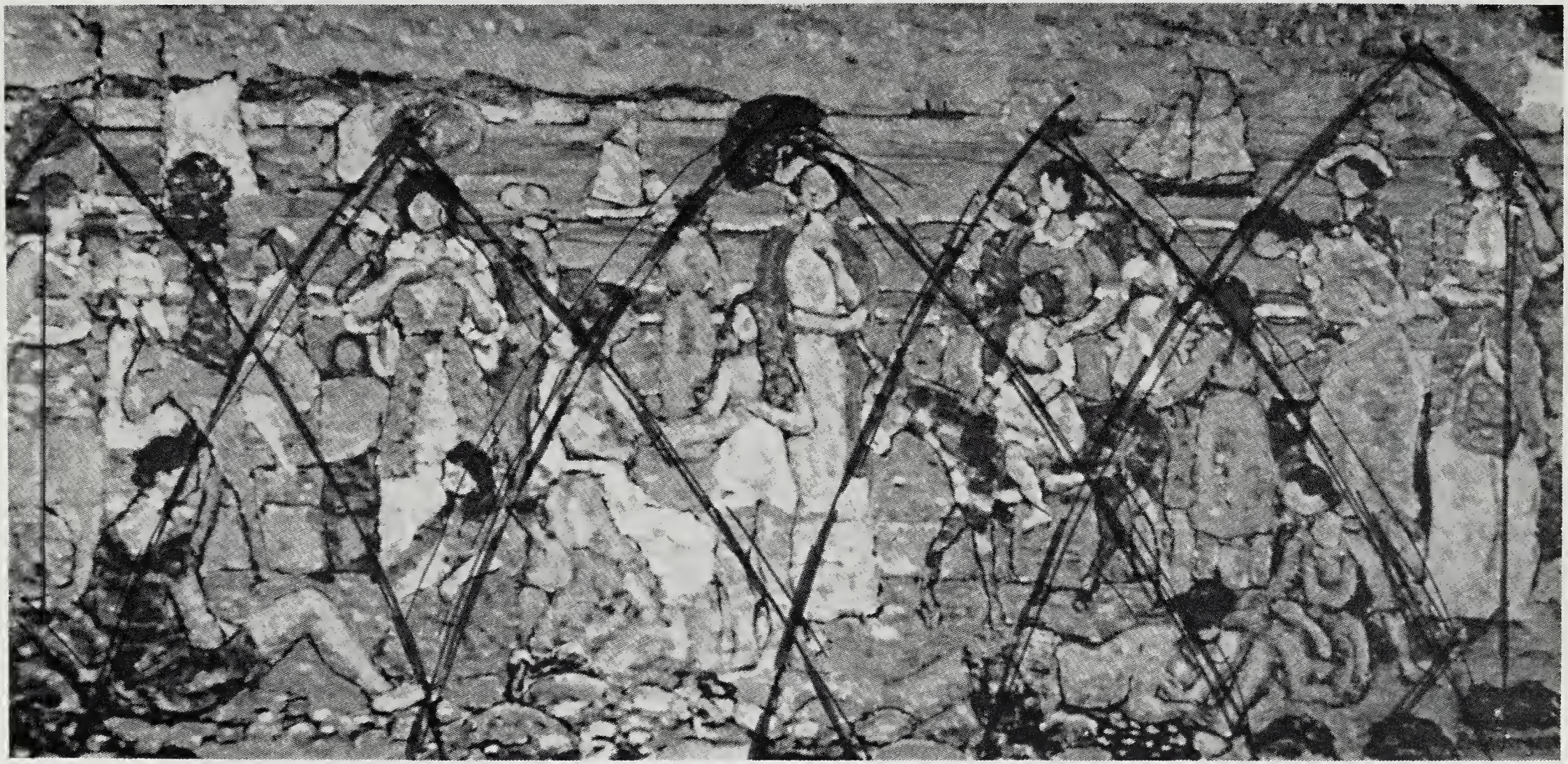

Maurice Prendergast

Revere Beach (Compositional Diagram)
—Pages 46, 47

FOLD-OUT

PLATE 110

Maurice Prendergast

Revere Beach (Compositional Diagram)
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PLATE 111

Maurice Prendergast

Revere Beach
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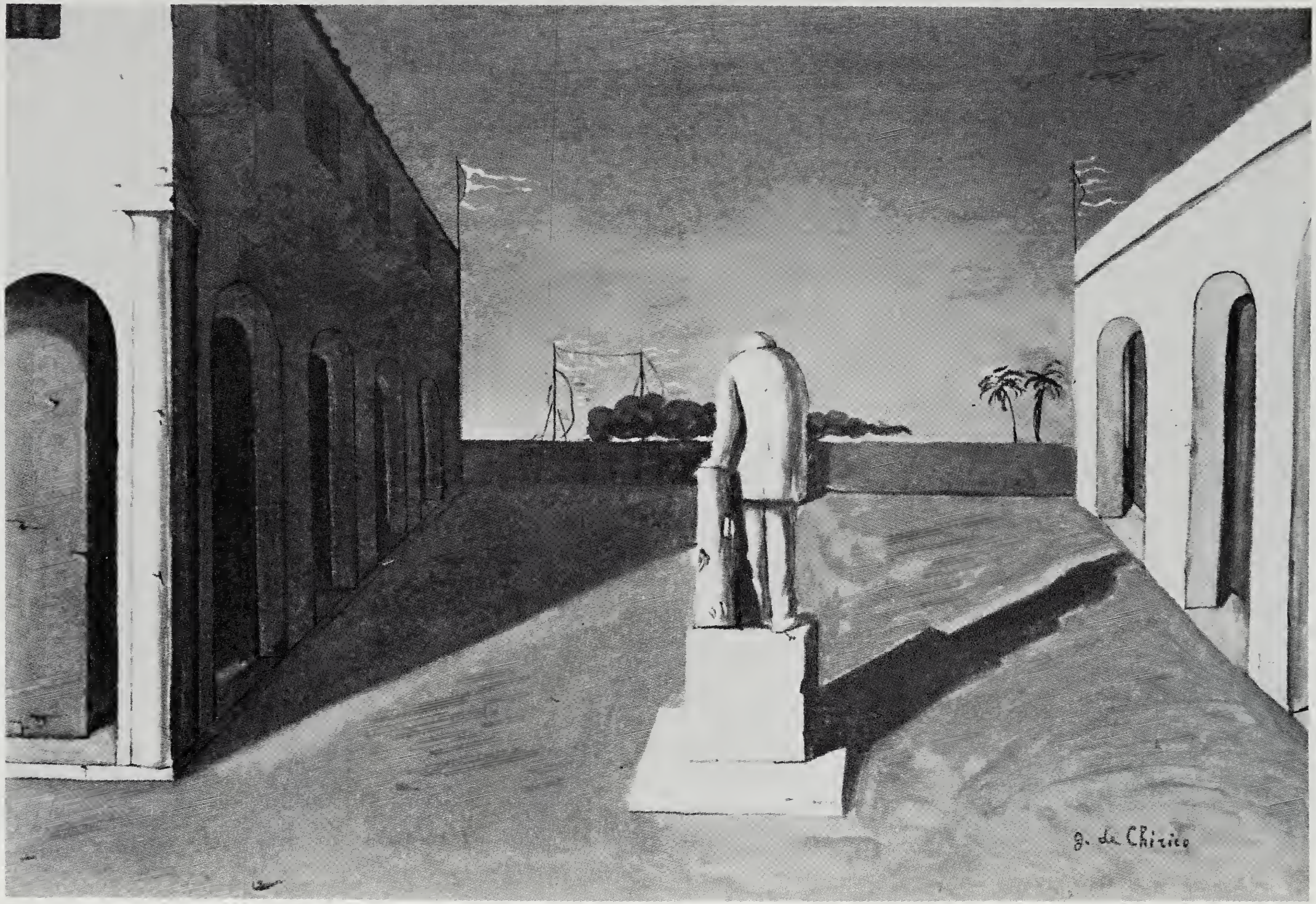
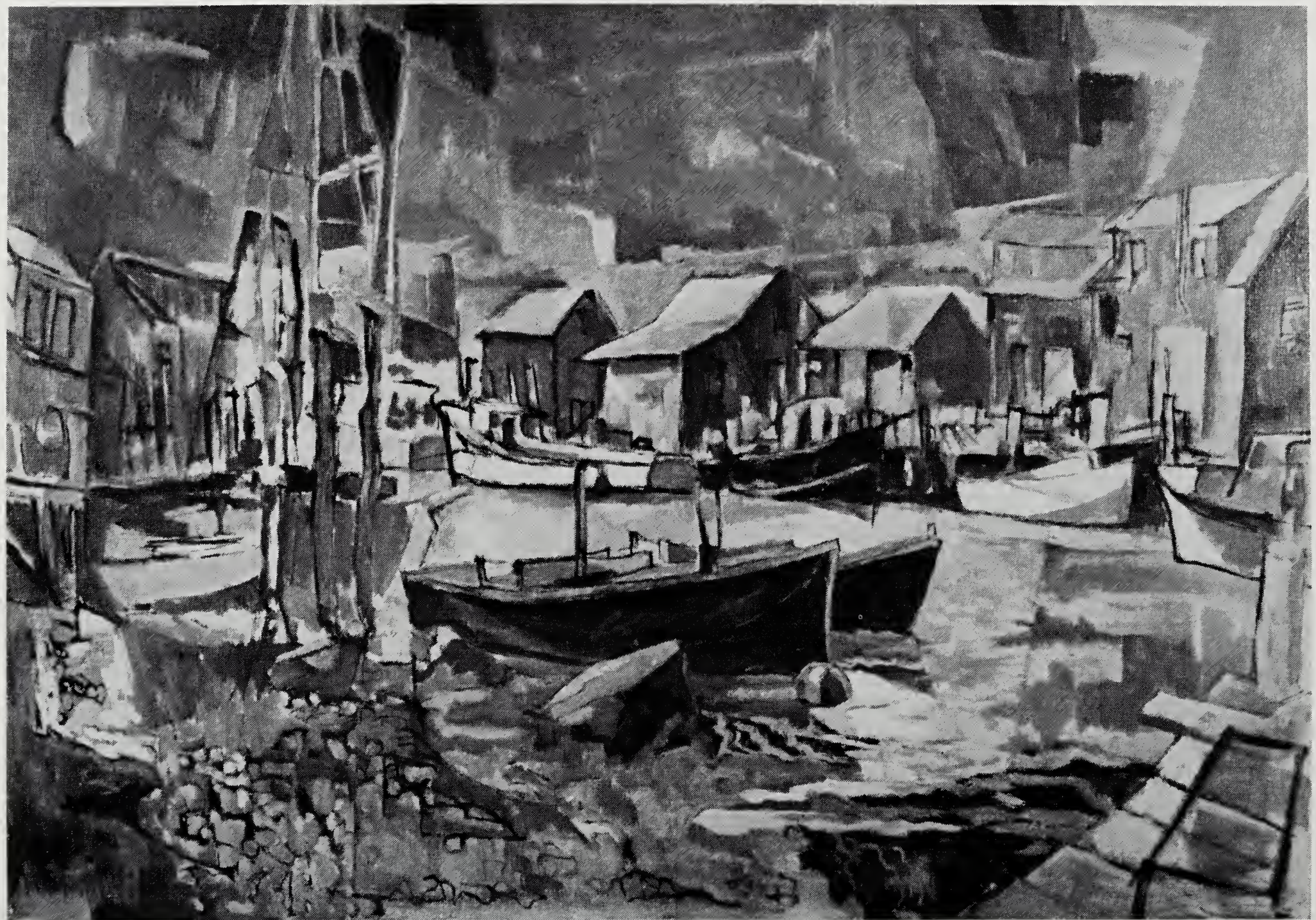


De Chirico

Plaza
—Page 105



Edward Loper, Jr.

Manemsha Pond
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Joy of Life
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Matisse

Blue Still Life
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Sicilian Landscape
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Wall Display
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Wall Display
at The Barnes Foundation

Room XIV (Center and left half of North Wall)
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Wall Display
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Room XIV (Center and right half of North Wall)
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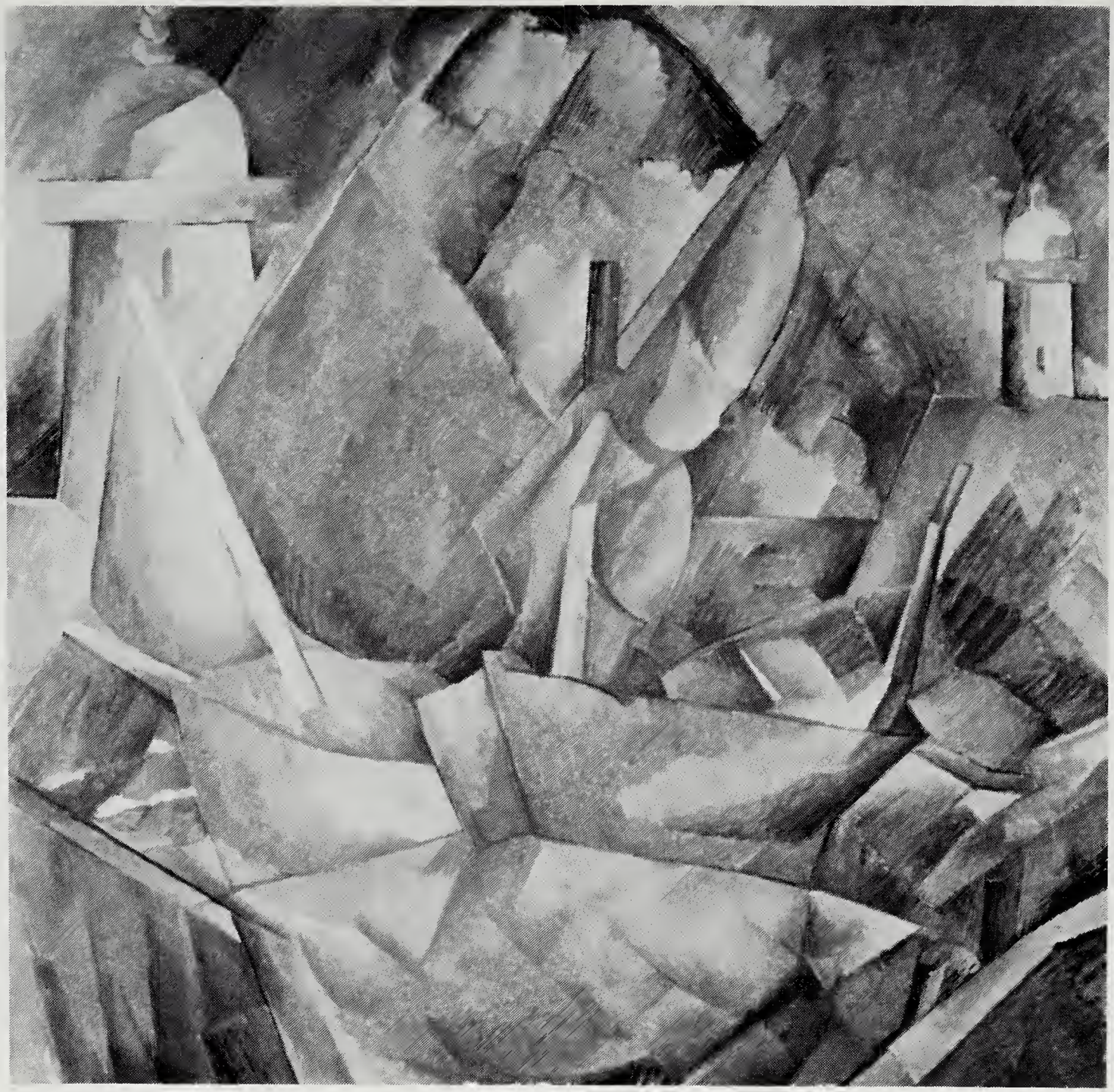
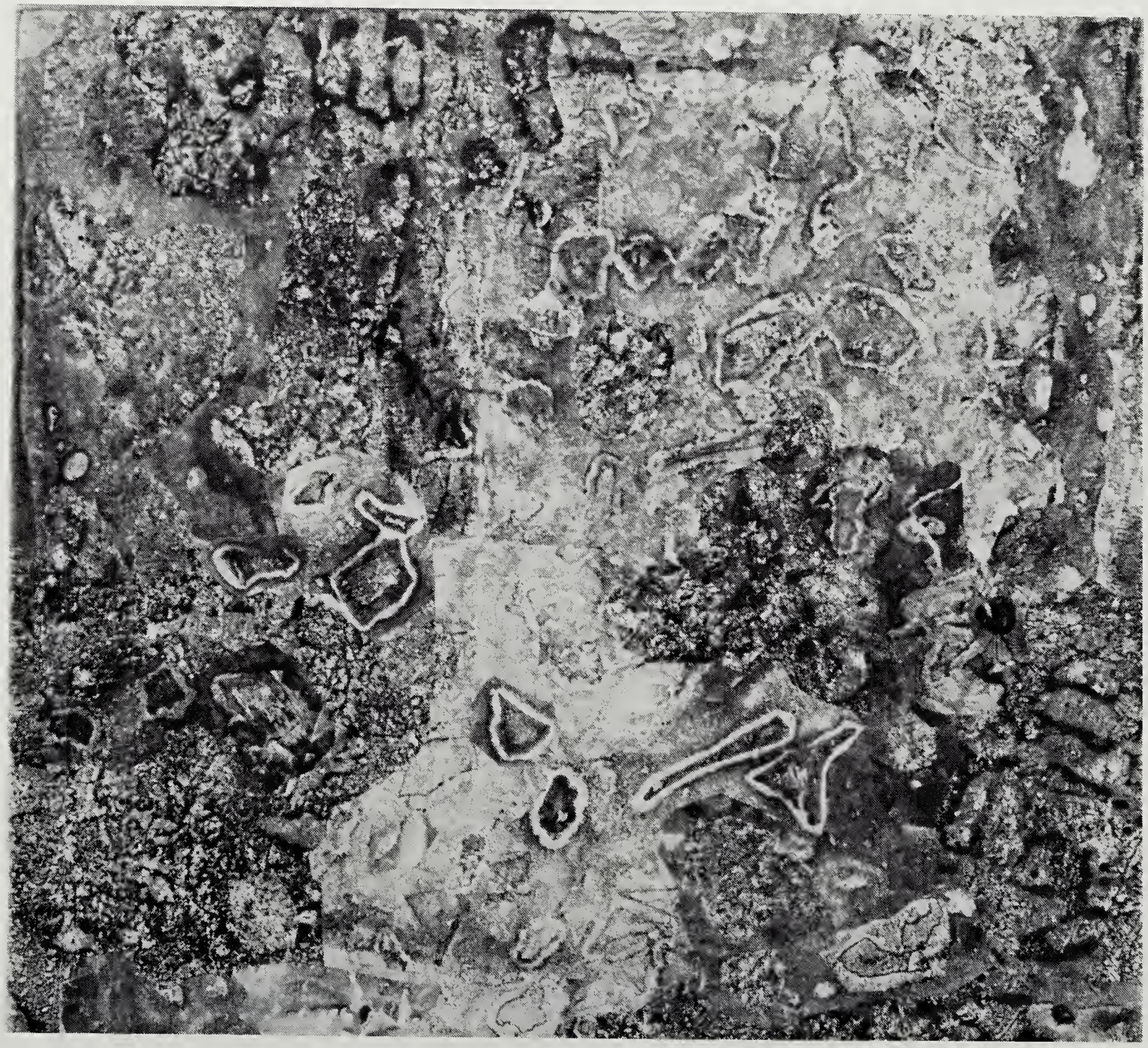


Braque

Harbor in Normandy
(Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago)—Page 101



Jean Dubuffet

Topographie mit gekräuseltem moos
(Topography with crinkly moss)
(Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna)—Page 103

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Editor—Violette de Mazia
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Curriculum of the Art Department *of* The Barnes Foundation

FIRST YEAR—BASIC COURSE

Fundamentals of art and of education. The problem of appreciation. The objective method. The roots of art. The art in art. Learning to see.

SECOND YEAR

Application of basic principles of art and of education to a systematic study of the aesthetic development of the important traditions of painting and of the work of individual artists.

SEMINAR AND RESEARCH SESSIONS

Individual study-projects in the arts and sciences based on the Foundation's educational method.

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